# THE LIVING GOD

## THE REVELATION OF THE HOLY TRINITY IN THE NEW TESTAMENT

JULES LEBRETON

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## THE REVELATION OF THE HOLY TRINITY IN THE NEW TESTAMENT

BY

JULES LEBRETON

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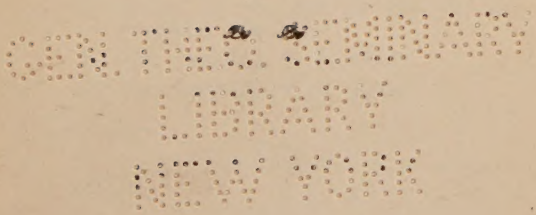

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"Quod opus Evangelii, quae est substantia Novi Testimenti statuens legem et prophetas usque ad Joannem, si non exinde Pater et Filius et Spiritus, tres crediti, unum Deum sistunt?"—Tertullian: *Adversus Praxeam*, C. xxxi.

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# PREFACE.

Mr. Hakluyt Egerton, editor of the *Eldermote Library,* was very wishful that the author of these pages should expound in them the Mystery of the Holy Trinity and its proofs as found in the New Testament.

With the consent of the authorities of the Roman Catholic Church, to whom the project of this collaboration and the text of this book have been submitted, the author gladly acceded to the request.

On other questions profound dogmatic differences separate us from the Church of England; but it is a joy to know that, in this matter of faith in the mystery of the Trinity, we are in complete accord. Once, in his discussion with the French Protestants, Bossuet willingly referred them to the learned works of George Bull, in which the Nicene faith is vigorously defended. Similarly, in a former work on the history of the Dogma of the Trinity, we ourselves frequently found support and fresh light in the writings of Anglican theologians.

We are glad to express our gratitude by writing for the members of the Church of England this exposition and this defence of our common faith. We think that they will be pleased to find here the actual words of their own authors to whom, in fact, we our-

selves have often turned. We have also frequently quoted the thoughts of the Fathers of the Church, both Greek and Latin, and though all our readers may not grant them the authority that we recognise, they do, nevertheless, respect their testimony, and respect for these great masters is yet another bond of union between us.

Before all else, we lay stress on the testimony of the New Testament books; it was the exposition of these that was asked of us, and it is in them we find the principal source of our faith in the Trinity. In the striking passage, transcribed at the head of this book, Tertullian says thus early, " What is the fruit of the Gospel, what is the substance of the New Testament . . . if the Father, the Son and the Holy Ghost, all Three confessed, do not constitute the only God?" What the priest of Carthage wrote at the end of the second century, we may repeat with certainty to-day. Doubtless, nineteen centuries of Christianity have led the Church to a fuller comprehension of the mysteries revealed by God: it is not in vain that so many Saints and Doctors have studied, worked and prayed; but the farther that Christians progress in the knowledge of their faith, the clearer will appear the revelation contained in the books of the New Testament. This God, so near, yet so unknown, after Whom the heathen groped, Whose voice was heard by the Jews, has been made manifest to Christians: they have be-

held Him, they adore Him, may they recognise Him here.

If this little book does good, the readers' thanks, and our own, will be due to the Editor with whom the idea originated, to the translator who has so kindly taken the trouble to turn these pages into English, and to the friend who has been so good as to look them through.

J.L.

*Editor's Note.*

The passages of Holy Scripture are, by special request, *literal* renderings from J. Lebreton.

*Abbreviations.*

P.G.—Patrologia Græco.
P.L.—Patrologia Latina.
D.B.—Hastings' Dictionary of the Bible.
D.C.G.—Hastings' Dictionary of Christ and the Gospels.

# CHAPTER I.

## INTRODUCTION.

WHEN the Arian heresy broke out in the fourth century and put in question the Dogma of the Trinity, Catholic doctors at once realised the gravity of the crisis: it was not one special point of Christian doctrine that was in jeopardy, it was Christianity as a whole: the paganism of the persecutors had been vanquished; it was reappearing—a far more terrible menace—within the bosom of the Church itself; Arius was taking revenge for Maximinus and Licinius. If the Son of God were not equal to and consubstantial with His Father, if He were merely a creature, the only choice left to the Christian faith lay between Paganism and Judaism: if she continued to worship this secondary God, she would lapse into heathen polytheism: if she reserved her adoration for the Supreme God—the Father—she would revert to Judaism. Returning to this argument, after many others, St. Basil expounds it thus: "Doubtless there are many differences which separate Christianity from the madness of the heathen and from the blindness of the Jews; but the most important of all is the capital dogma of belief in the Father and the Son as contained in the Gospel of Salvation. What

place can we find among us for a man who holds that the Father is not really Father, who considers the name Son an empty title? Under what sect must such a man be classified?

"Is he a Jew? Is he a heathen? Certainly a man who denies that wherein lies the whole force of our religion, that which gives our adoration its distinctive character, has no status among Christians."*

At the end of the Second Century the Church had already been obliged to repel the attacks of the Monarchians. These heretics did not deny the divinity of the Son as the Arians did later; but they effaced all personal distinction between the Father and the Son, and by so doing, they ruined the Dogma of the Trinity. The Church brought all her strength to bear against these Monarchians; she realised and pointed out that in this controversy the whole of the Christian Revelation was at stake: "It is Judaism," said Tertullian, "to acknowledge One only God while refusing to distinguish side by side with the Father, the Son, and after the Son, the Holy Ghost. For what difference will there be between Christians and Jews if not this? What is the fruit of the Gospel, what is the substance of the New Testament establishing the Law and the Prophets until John, if, in the end, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, all three

* Adversus Eunomium, 2. 22 (P.G. 29. 620.)

acknowledged, do not constitute the only God?"*

It is not only under the pressure of controversy that the Church dwells upon the supreme importance of the Dogma of the Trinity.

From the very beginning, it is round this central dogma that she works out her formulæ of Faith. We know the creed to which every neophyte had to subscribe when presenting himself for baptism; this profession of faith, the existence of which can be proved as far back as *circa* the year 100, and which, even before this date, had been gradually evolved by Christian usage, has for its chief aim the One God in three Persons as recognised in the Dogma of the Trinity:

"I believe in God the Father Almighty;

"And in Jesus Christ His only Son, Our Lord, born of the Holy Ghost and the Virgin Mary; who, under Pontius Pilate, was crucified and buried; the third day He rose from the dead, ascended into Heaven, is seated on the right of the Father, whence He will come to judge the quick and the dead;

"And in the Holy Ghost, in the Holy Church, in the remission of sins, in the resurrection of the flesh."†

* Adversus Praxeam, 31 (P.G. 2. 196).

† This creed called the Apostles' Creed is attested by many texts in the second and third centuries, but it is not until the fourth century that it is quoted integrally, in Latin by Rufinus, and by Marcellus of Ancyra, in Greek.

This Symbol of Faith was, in its turn, only a development of the formula used by the Church in the administration of baptism: " In the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost "; as we shall see later on, it was Christ Himself who prescribed this formula for His Apostles, who, in their turn, transmitted it to the Church.

We recall these facts at the commencement of this study, not to sketch the development of the dogma, but only to place again before the eyes of the reader the Church's judgment on this subject. Our Christian faith is the same as that professed by the Fathers, the same as they received from the Apostles; for them, the Dogma of the Trinity was not merely an accessory ornament in the edifice of Revelation, it was the keystone of the arch: on it everything else depended, by it everything was held together, without it everything would crumble away.

A faith indifferent to this fundamental dogma could not, in any sense, be considered the faith of the Apostles, and the man who could rest contented in such a faith might call himself Jew or heathen as he pleased: he would certainly not be a Christian.

Now if we wish to state more precisely the scope of this doctrine it can be summed up in these two paramount assertions.

God is unique, eternal, infinite, necessary:

in God are three Persons truly distinct—the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost.*

Of these two verities, the first is approachable by the natural light of human reason, God "left not Himself without witness in that He did good and gave us rain from Heaven and fruitful seasons filling our hearts with food and gladness" (Acts xiv. 17); if men disregarded this witness they are without excuse (Rom. i. 20, 21).

Nevertheless, God was pleased to confirm by an express revelation what He had already made manifest in His works; He spoke to Israel, to Israel He entrusted His oracles.

In this revelation, graciously granted by God to the chosen people, He made known to them His law, He promised them His Kingdom, but Himself He only partially revealed. Doubtless, the coming of Christ threw light on the Old Testament, and, by this light, many Christian writers have been able to see—in certain texts in the Prophets, in the Psalms and in Genesis—presages of the future revelation. But, even those who love to emphasise these indications, recognise that they are too obscure to have unveiled the secrets of the divine life to the Jews, and

* Readers who desire a more explicit or more detailed definition of the Dogma of the Trinity may be referred to the creed called the Athanasian Creed. This formula of faith was worked out slowly and laboriously by the Church not only by the Nicean Fathers, but also and chiefly by St. Augustine.

in this intentional obscurity, they detect a compassionate design.

The Jews, barely converted from Polytheism, were not established in the faith in the One God; had the divinity of the Messiah been preached to them, it would have occasioned their backsliding into idolatry.* When one notices the infinite precaution with which Christ manifests Himself in the Gospel, one is not surprised that God revealed His mysteries with even greater reserve to these men whose "eyes were blinded, whose ears were deaf, whose hearts were hardened."

But, finally, "after having at different times, and in diverse ways, spoken formerly to our Fathers by the Prophets, God in these last times has spoken to us by the Son."

Thenceforth, we have the complete revelation, not indeed in its full glory dazzling the world as by a sudden lightning-flash, but progressively, like the light of the sun "The day-spring from on high hath visited us, to give light to them that sit in darkness and in the shadow of death."

It was the appearance of the Son of God upon earth which manifested to man the divine life and its secrets. "God hath no man seen, the Only-begotten Son Who is in the bosom of the Father, hath declared Him unto us." The Son alone could do this, only He could bring us into this intimacy.

* St. John Chrysostom, De Incomprehensibili, 5. 3. (P.G. 48—740).

Up to this point, we had known of God no more than His outward action; this, being common to the Three Persons, like their nature, could not reveal to us their distinction.

Henceforward, we were to know the inward process of this divine life which from the Father pours itself forth into the Person of the Son, and from Father and Son into the Holy Ghost.

Jesus gave us to know this divine life by His teaching, but still more by the manifestation of His Person: "he who sees Me, sees the Father," He said to Philip on the last day of His life.

Like a perfect mirror, He reflects the Father; the more intimate knowledge we have of Him, the better we know the Father, the better also we apprehend the infinitely close relation which unites the Father and the Son to each other.

Now, also, we better understand why the mystery of the Trinity is so dear to every Christian: it is the full revelation of God. Whoso has not received this divine confidence is only a stranger, or, at best, a servant; that is the position of the heathen and the Jews; it is not that of Christians: "I no more call you servants, for the servant knoweth not what his Master doeth; but I have called you friends, because all that I have heard from My Father, I have made known unto you."

And not satisfied with communicating these secrets to us, the Son introduces us into personal intimacy with the Father. "That they may all be one, even as Thou Father art in Me, and I in Thee . . . that I may be in them and Thou in Me, in order that they may be consummated in unity."

At the beginning of his treatise on the Trinity, St. Hilary retraces the path that he had followed to find God: heathen philosophers had only given him popular and uncertain opinions without raising him above himself, without showing him God.

In the books of Moses he discovered the certainty of the elevated doctrine that he sought: "I found there," said he, "the witness that God gives to Himself; 'I am that I am.' I admired this positive declaration which expresses incomprehensible knowledge of the divine nature under a formula so well adapted to human intelligence." He continued his studies and recognised the immensity of God, His omnipotence, His beauty; he further saw that this just and good God would recompense His servants, after their death, in a future life.

He had gone as far as this in his investigations and was already somewhat weary, when he began to read the Gospel of St. John: "In the beginning was the Word . ." It was a new world—the divine world—which was revealed to him. "At once," said he, "the mind is carried beyond what it compre-

hends naturally: what it learns from God surpasses all conception and the Soul, previously anxious and troubled, discovers an unlooked for hope."

God appeared to him as his Father, He promised him, as reward, to adopt him as His child; and to guide his efforts towards this goal, the Word of God was made Flesh and became a sacrifice in order to guide him to his Father.

This sketch, traced by a great scholar, and a great saint, indicates exactly the importance of this revelation. The Dogma of the Trinity manifests a life in God, which no creature could have imagined; and it offers to Christians a hope such as no one would have dared to dream.

This dogma, which, at first sight, seems purely theoretical, and the religious importance of which an unbeliever would not suspect, does in reality transform all Christian faith and Christian hope.

It is worth while to insist a little on this fact: no consideration is more effective for making us love our belief and for attaching us more closely to it.

"*God the Father*"—this paternity, in the characteristic and natural sense, is the relation which unites the First Person of the Holy Trinity to the Second: from the Father, as from a perennially flowing spring, the divine nature pours itself forth into the Son,

totally, necessarily, and at the same time with sovereign good pleasure: and the Father and the Son united by the joint possession of this identical nature, love each other with an infinite love, and this love is the Holy Ghost. Wonderful is this, assuredly, but how far it all seems from us! The Father has given everything to His Son; what will He give to His creatures? And what share are they to have in these outpourings of the divine life which seems to return so jealously upon itself?

The reply has been given us many times by Christ and by the Apostles. "Behold, what manner of love the Father hath testified to us that we may be called children of God and that we may, in fact, be His children" (1. John iii. 1.) and again: "All those who are led by the Spirit of God, they are the Sons of God, because you have not received a spirit of bondage to be still in fear, but you have received a spirit of adoption, wherein we cry Abba, Father: the Spirit itself bears witness that we are the children of God; now if we are children we are also heirs, heirs of God and co-heirs with Christ" (Rom. viii. 14—17.).

Christ has enabled us to follow Him into the divine family; and He, the only Son, elects to be "the first born among many brethren." Of course the difference between Him and us remains infinite. He is the Son by nature, we are the sons adopted by Grace,

Nevertheless, this adoption is a true one, and, by the Spirit which is given us, we are truly made "participators in the divine nature."

Herein lies the grandeur of which St. Hilary speaks in the passage quoted above, a grandeur, in fact, unhoped for, and which the righteous of the Old Testament never imagined. Origen writes in his Treatise on Prayer (22. 1.): "It is worth while to search the Old Testament to see if there can be found anywhere a prayer addressing God as Father; we have done our best, but up to now, have found nothing of the kind. We will not say that God is not called Father, and those who believe in Him, the children of God; we only say that we have not met with any prayer daring to address God under the name of Father, in the manner in which the Saviour here teaches us to do."

The prayer which Jesus taught to His disciples, began to form in them the filial heart that the gift of the Spirit would fully complete; no doubt others besides Christians could say this prayer; in a Parliament of Religions it might be recited by men professing all the beliefs in the universe; yet though all might indeed recite it, only a Christian could understand it.

"No one knows the Father except the Son, and those to whom the Son wills to reveal Him."

"*God the Son.*" It is under this head

that the consequences of the Dogma of the Trinity are most evident, because it is on this head that the efforts of the Church and the Fathers have been brought specially to bear: against all those—Arians or others—who have imperilled this doctrine, the Church has repeatedly pointed out how the whole salvation of men depends upon it. The Son of God, taking upon Him human nature through the Incarnation, has, thereby, raised human nature up to God; but, if He is not Himself God, this elevation is illusory. "If it be a creature who is made man, man remains what he was; for him, union with God is no more possible."

This is the favourite argument of St. Athanasius, and he returns to it perpetually.* The same truth may be illustrated by examining the Redemption by the death of Christ: this is the supreme revelation of the love of God; it is also the surest foundation of our hope. "God shows His love towards us, in that, while we were sinners, Jesus Christ died for us. Much more now that we are justified in His blood, shall we be saved by Him from wrath. Because if, while we were yet enemies, we were reconciled with God by the death of His Son, much more being reconciled shall we be saved by His life" (Rom. v. 8—10). What remains of this cogent argument, if Christ be not really and truly the Son of God? In vain do we

* Adversus Arianos, orat, 2, 67, 69, 70; 3, 33, etc.

see in the death of Jesus the manifestation of the love of the Father, in vain do we seek our support in it. If it be not His Son whom God has delivered up for us, what do we know of His love? If it be a creature whose blood was shed upon the Cross, what is the value of this redemption?*

These proofs are very clear, but they take for granted the other fundamental dogmas of Christianity; they had great weight in the controversy with the Arians who still believed these dogmas; they are less convincing to many of those who to-day do not believe in the Trinity; for them, or at least the greater number of them, the Redemption, the supernatural elevation of human nature, have no longer the definite meaning which the teaching of St. Paul gave to them, and which the traditional faith of Christians recognised in them.

This is not the place to build up a detailed defence of Christianity and to make good all the articles of our creed one after another. It will suffice to note how much this new theology loses by the negation of the divinity of the Son of God, even as regards the religious truths which it thinks it can still maintain. It lays great stress upon Christ's

* These reflections, drawn from the Redemption, on the love that God has shown towards us in delivering up His Son for us, and on the price of the Blood of Christ, are dear to St. Augustine, and he often reverts to them; e.g., Serm. 22, 9 (P.L. 38, 153).

example; though, for it, His death has no longer the value of a Redeemer's Sacrifice, it remains an heroic act of devotion and piety; His whole life is a model of union with God, of a filial spirit towards Him, and of love to one's neighbour. All that is certainly true, yet infinitely below the reality; for who does not see that if we keep to the value of the life and death of Christ as an ideal, this model offered us, by losing its divinity, loses the main source of its power over souls? On the last day of His mortal life, Jesus, wishing to give an unforgetable lesson to His Apostles, washed their feet and then said to them, " Do you not understand what I have done to you? You call Me Master and Lord, and you say well, for so I am; If I then, the Lord and Master, have washed your feet, you also ought to wash one another's feet, for I have given you the example in order that as I have done to you, you yourselves may also do " (John xiii. 12—15). Christ, always so humble, deliberately reminded them in this instance of His greatness: He knew that the efficacy of His example depended upon it. When the Apostle Paul wished to commend humility and mutual consideration to the Philippian Christians, he set before them the example of the Son of God: " Have the same mind in you that was in Christ Jesus. Being in the form of God, He did not regard equality with God, as a thing to be snatched at, but

He despoiled Himself by taking the form of a slave and becoming like men " (Phil. ii. 5—7). Can those who turn away their eyes from the Incarnation of the Son of God, hope to find anywhere, for the sustenance of their religious life, an example like that? St. Augustine, recalling in his *Confessions* all the vain efforts he had made to arrive at God when he was still ignorant of Christ, writes: " I sought by what means I might attain the power which would make me capable of enjoying Thee, and I could not find it until the day on which I apprehended the Mediator between God and man, the Man Christ Jesus Who is above all, God blessed for evermore." During these long and fruitless searches, what was he thinking of Christ? " I looked upon Him as a Man of pre-eminent wisdom, who had not His equal, especially since this Master, miraculously born of a virgin, seemed to have received from God exceptional authority to teach us by His example to scorn temporal advantages and to follow after immortality. But what the mystery of the Word made flesh might be, I could not even imagine " *(Confessions* vii. 18—19). It was this mystery which became for him, as it is for every Christian, light and strength.

It is sometimes objected that a Master Who is divine is too distant from us, and that were He but simply one of ourselves, simply a man like us, He would be nearer to us,

more one with us, therefore, more ready to help. This is a great mistake: were Jesus Christ merely a man, He would be but a stranger to us; His life would go on its way without contact with ours, a life bounded by and taken up with itself, like so many others which, developing parallel with our own, while able to stimulate or to injure it, never penetrate its inmost recesses. The greater, the wiser, the more heroic this man was, the more removed would he be from us, and he would give us no more real support than Plato, or Dante, or Shakespere, or Bossuet. If Christ is "our inseparable life" it is because He is the Son of God. It is for this reason that He is able to enlighten us by His light, to guide us by His inspirations within us, to uplift us by His grace, to animate us by His life. It is for this reason that He can say to us: "I am the Vine, you are the branches; whoever abides in Me and in whom I abide, the same bears much fruit, because without Me you can do nothing." Here is the link by which the theology of the Son of God is attached to that of the Holy Ghost. In the discourse from which these words are taken, Christ promises to His disciples not to leave them orphaned, but to return to them, and to make His dwelling with them; at the same time He promises to send them, or to have sent to them by His Father, the other Paraclete who should guide and teach them and give them

to understand all that Jesus had said to them during His mortal life.

*"God the Holy Ghost."* The connection which has just been recalled between the work of the Son of God and that of the Holy Ghost in Christian souls, already illuminates the whole theology of the Holy Ghost: in like manner, in the course of this study, it will be seen in greater detail, that this comparison, stated so emphatically by Christ, shows that the Holy Ghost, the other Paraclete, is a Person like the Son Himself Who is the first Paraclete: it further shows that this Person is His equal in dignity and in the efficacy of His work, for the very departure of Jesus is beneficial to the Apostles in that it ensures to them the boon of this new Presence.

Without now going into the proof of this in detail, we limit ourselves to the consideration of the dogma of the divinity of the Holy Ghost as a whole, as has already been done in reference to the two other Persons, and from this consideration determine its bearing upon the Christian life as a whole.

The Fathers who had to defend this dogma against the heresies of Arius and Macedonius insisted upon the intimate union of the Incarnate Word with the Holy Ghost: it is by the operation of the Holy Ghost that the Son of God is conceived by the Virgin Mary; it is the Spirit of God Which rests on Him

at Baptism; it is under the impulse of this Spirit that Jesus retires into the desert; it is by virtue of this Spirit that He casts out demons and works miracles.

Can it be imagined that the Son of God, God Himself, works thus under the influence or by virtue of some *creature?** On the contrary, must it not be recognised that the union manifested in such a manner must be derived from the eternal union of the Son with the Holy Ghost?†

The part of the Holy Ghost in the Holy Church continues even as it reveals itself in the Gospel. He acts on every Christian in due proportion as He acts upon the Head of all Christians, on Christ Himself. Each of them must be born of the Spirit, upon each the Spirit rests, in each the Spirit works, illuminating, guiding, raising him above himself. From these facts an argument arises, the same that the Fathers urged for the divinity of the Son and which they equally applied to the divinity of the Holy Ghost. This union with God, most precious to the Christian, is nothing but illusion if it is not a God Who was incarnate and Who made our nature one with that of God: in the same way, this union no longer

* Cyril Alex. Thes. 35 (P.S. 75, 616); Ambros. De Spiritu S. 3, 1—2 (P.L. 16, 777).

† H. B. Swete, "The Holy Spirit in the New Testament," p. 305.

exists if it be not the Holy Ghost who loves us and sanctifies us.*

Following the Fathers, yet another consideration may be applied to the Holy Ghost. We said above, that, if Jesus Christ is not truly the Son of God, He is outside us and unknown to us; He cannot be one with us: the same holds good of the Holy Ghost; if He be not God, all that Scripture tells us of His dwelling in our souls is only a figure of speech, and all our faith in His presence is mere illusion: only a God can dwell in a human soul.†

This rapid sketch suffices to show how closely the theology of the Holy Ghost is interwoven with that of the Son of God.

The farther one goes in this study, the more evident it becomes that the light of Christ alone can illuminate the mystery of the Trinity; whoever refuses to acknowledge this mystery is not a disciple of Christ. That was the first thought in our study, and, even so, we can now say that we penetrate into, or at least catch glimpses of this mystery in proportion as we know Christ. In revealing Himself to us, He reveals the Father to us, and He gives us the Spirit. The most attentive reading of the Gospel will only confirm and corroborate these opinions. But before entering into this detail it is necessary once

* Athans. Ad. Sera. 1, 29 (PG. 26, 597). "Who could unite you with God if you have not the Spirit of God Himself?"

† Didym. de Trinitate, 2, 6, 7 (P.G. 39, 529).

more to consider the Holy Trinity; not, as we have done up to the present, to consider each of the Three divine Persons separately, but the One God in Three Persons.

*"One God in Three Persons."* In the Athanasian Creed, the Catholic faith is defined thus: "Fides catholica hæc est, ut unum Deum in Trinitate, et Trinitatem in unite veneremur," and a little farther on: "Deus Pater, Deus Filius, Deus Spiritus Sanctus. Et tamen non tres Dii, sed unus est Deus." That is a primordial truth that cannot for one moment be lost sight of. When our Lord was asked, "What is the first commandment?" He at once replied: "Hear, O Israel, the Lord our God is one only Lord." This verse of Deuteronomy was the first sentence of the daily prayer of every Israelite; it is still the first article of every Christian's faith.

Our faith then must not "confound the Persons," but neither must it "divide the substance," that incorporeal and immutable unity of the Trinity.*

If it be asked how can we believe in three divine Persons without believing in three Gods, certainly we cannot profess to give a reply that will render the mystery comprehensible: it surpasses not only our intelligence and that of those who question us, but it

* Augustine, De Trinitate, 8, 15. ". . . . deitatem, quæ non est creatura, sed est unitas Trinitatis incorporea et incommutabilis et sibimet consubstantialis et coæterna natura."

surpasses all created intelligence: these are the " depths of God " which the Spirit of God alone can fathom, and surely no man having any perception of what God is and what he is himself, will be surprised to encounter mystery here: on the contrary—the claim to elucidate the divine life to its very depths and to make it transparent to human eyes would be the most certain indication of a purely human doctrine and one unworthy of God. This, at least, one has the right to demand of us, that our faith should not contradict itself: our reason comes from God, it is the light that guides us; God certainly does not ask us to renounce it and to blind ourselves.

Reduced to these very legitimate requirements, the question stated here has always preoccupied Catholic teachers, and they have not been lacking in replies. St. Augustine, writing on this point to an Arian correspondent, Count Pascentius, thus expounds his belief and ours: " Our faith consists in believing and confessing that the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit are one Sole God; and yet we say that He Who is the Son is not the Father, that He Who is the Father is not the Son, that He Who is the Holy Spirit is neither the Father nor the Son. For by these names the relation that They bear to each other is signified, not the substance by which They are One Thing. For when we say ' father ' we cannot but mean the father

of a son; similarly the name 'son' must indicate relationship to a father; and as far as "spirit" expresses any relationship, it must be the spirit of one who breathes *(spirans)* just as he who breathes is so called from the spirit which he breathes forth."*

St. Hilary had already formulated the same reply in his compact and nervous language: "The Father and the Son are one Sole Substance because they are entirely relative one to the other: *Unum sunt qui invicem sunt.*"†

The Greek Fathers frequently and forcibly express the same thought.‡

On this point all Catholic theology will be

* Epist. 238, 2, 14 (P.L. 33, 1043). "Fides autem nostra," etc.

† De Trinitate, 7, 32 (PL. 10, 226—227). "Duos itaque," etc.

‡ E.g.: St. Gregory of Nyssa "quod non sint tres Dii" (P.G. 45, 133b). St. Gregory of Nazianzen, orat 25, 16 (P.G. 35, 1221); St. John of Damascus, de Fide Orthodoxa 1, 10 (PG. 94, 837): It may be noticed that these fundamental affirmations give the strongest support to the dogma of the procession of the Holy Ghost "A Patre Filioque." In the Trinity the unique source of distinction is found in relations which are mutually opposed; if a relation of this kind does not exist between the Son and the Holy Ghost, they are no longer distinct. Besides, it is clearly understood that if the Son is, with the Father, the principle of the procession of the Holy Ghost, He receives that—as He receives everything—from the Father; consequently one may equally say that the Holy Ghost proceeds from the Father and from the Son (thus the Latins generally, and, among the Greeks, S. Epiphanius, Didymus, St. Cyril of Alexandria) and that He proceeds from the Father by the Son (thus the greater number of the Greek Fathers). These two formulæ do not oppose each other, and are both true and legitimate expressions of the dogma.

only a development of these propositions: no distinction whatever between the Persons except in so far as they are contrasted by their mutual relations; therefore there is in God only one unique nature, not of a *specific unity* such as exists between the natures of two different individuals, Peter and Paul, but of a *numerical identity*. The divine nature, being infinite, is not susceptible of being multiplied among many objects which would belong to the same species.

The activity, too, like the nature, is unique. When we read in St. John (v. 19) "the Son can do nothing of Himself, but only that which He sees His Father do; because all that the Father does, the Son does also," or again "I can do nothing by Myself" (*id.* v. 30), these texts should not be interpreted as if they signified only the perfect obedience of Christ; they go much farther than that, they reach the divine operation itself which is necessarily common to the Father and the Son; and, since the Father is the unique principle of the divine life, He is also the unique principle of the operation, and from this we are once more brought back to the divine unity. "The Trinity," writes St. Athanasius, "is indivisible by nature, and its operation is one; for the Father does everything through the Word in the Holy Spirit: thus is the unity of the Holy Trinity safeguarded, and thus is it that One only God is preached by the Church, the God Who is

above all, Who compenetrates all, Who is in all."*

We delight, here, to re-read the very words of the Fathers. In face of this mystery which infinitely surpasses us, towards which, notwithstanding, our whole life ought to reach out, we are guided by the light of Catholic tradition, of which these great teachers are the most highly authorised representatives. Their testimony, so diverse in origin, coming as it does from the whole of Christendom, both Eastern and Western, so unanimous in meaning, obviously gives us not merely the conviction of a theological school, but the common faith of the Church.

This impression is confirmed when we notice that all these Doctors, St. Athanasius as well as St. Hilary, St. Gregory Nazianzen as well as St. Augustine, are always careful to ground their opinions on prior tradition and on the Scriptures, and take it for granted that they can do this without the least fear of being contradicted. " See," said St. Athanasius to his opponents, " we can prove that our doctrine has always been transmitted from Fathers to Fathers; but you, new Jews and disciples of Caiaphas, what Fathers can

* Ad Serapionem, 1, 23 (PG. 26, 596).
The considerations that have just been expounded are to be found, in an admirably vivid and striking form, in St. Augustine—*in Joannem*, tract, 39, 3, 4 (P.L. 35, 1682—1683.

you show us who have held what you now teach?"*

From this comes the distinctive character of the Arian heresy: it was able to seduce theologians and to ravage the schools, but at first it depended only upon a coterie of *literati,*† then on the cabals of courtiers. Hence also arose the carefulness of the heads of the sect to preserve, as far as possible, traditional phraseology, in order to deceive the people, who did not suspect, that, underlying the formulæ created by the faith of the Church, was hidden a new doctrine opposed to that faith.‡

The Fathers of the fourth century were not innovators. In their teaching we hear the faithful echo of the uninterrupted tradition of the Church; and when, on this capital dogma of the Unity of the Substance and the Trinity of the Persons, we see them set forth and explain the faith with so much power and unanimity, we may be certain of finding, not the personal conception of some theologian, but the authentic expression of revealed doctrine. Further, this most profound and fertile view, which sees in the mutual relations of the divine Persons the unique source of their distinction, is illuminated not

* De decretis, Nic. syn., 27 (PG. 25, 465).

† Cf. Newman, *Causes of the Rise and Successes of Arianism.*" Tracts theological and ecclesiastical, p. 143.

‡ St. Hilary, Contra Auxent., 6 (PG. 10, 613) complains of this fraud which abuses the honest faith of the people. "Huius quidem usque," etc.

only by tradition, but also by the witness of Scripture. This is the light which guided the Fathers: they found the point of departure for their researches in the name itself of the divine Persons, as revealed to us by Christ the Father and the Son:* they followed the way that Our Lord opened out to them by express declarations: "The Son can do nothing by Himself but only what He sees His Father do."

The Person of the Son of God Himself, as manifested in the Gospel, is yet more revealing than His words. What He affirms on several occasions, "My Father and I are one sole reality," or again, addressing His Father: "All that which is Mine is Yours and all that is Yours is Mine," is a profound reality to which His whole life testifies. On the Father's side there is a complete outpouring; He puts into the hands of the Son all that He has and all that He is, His power,

* The Arians, instead of saying Father, preferred to say "uncreated" or "unbegotten" (Ἀγένητος) St. Athanasius opposes this pretension thus: "As much as the *Logos* differs from created things, so much difference is there between the expressions 'Father' and 'uncreated.' In fact, this last term is unscriptural, it is open to suspicion by its ambiguity, of such a kind that many different interpretations can be made of it. The name 'Father' is simple, scriptural, truer, and only envisages the Son. 'Uncreated' is borrowed from the Greeks who did not know the Son; 'Father' has been graciously revealed to us by Our Lord" (Contra Arianos, 1, 34 P.G. 26, 81). Notice the two arguments put forward by St. Athanasius: the name "Father" is to be preferred because scripture itself reveals it to us, and because it marks the relation with another Divine Person, the Son.

His sovereign authority, His work in the world, His life itself; He delivers up to Him everything. And the Son, holding all this in His hands, holds it as coming from His Father; in Him this constitutes an intimate dependence surpassing everything that we know on earth. A disciple can imitate his master, penetrate his thoughts, devote himself to his service; a son, effacing himself entirely, can make the aim of his whole life to second and carry on his father's work; still better can a Christian consecrate all the force, the love, the adoration he possesses to the service of his Heavenly Father, and to the coming of His Kingdom; but all this is nothing to the absolute dependence of the Son of God in relation to His Father. In the examples of human devotion that have been cited, one may be sure that the gift of self is not complete, and that there always is, at the bottom of the soul, something which is the soul itself, and, therefore, cannot be given. In the case of Jesus, the more profoundly we penetrate into His life, the more we feel that it sets towards Another and is dependent upon Him. Can we say that He gives Himself? That is not enough: He is not plenary possessor of Himself, but incessantly receives, in its plenitude, the life, the grace, the light, which from the Father are diffused in Him.

Such is, as far as we are able to catch a glimpse of it and to describe it, the mystery

of the Son of God and of His relations with the Father; this is what is apparent in the Gospels, this is what Catholic theology has laboured to understand and has analysed. If sometimes the dust of controversy seems to dull it all, let us turn from quarrels, let us leave disputation to the Arians and other heretics, and cling close to this fountain of living water; nothing is more lofty, nothing is more productive of the fruits of religion.

When God manifests Himself to us only in His works, we are disconcerted by the spectacle of His distant and solitary majesty. Everything was made by Him and everything tends towards Him; but—Creator and End of all things—He cannot make of His creatures the final goal of His work and of His life. Independent of all, fully sufficient for Himself, He is in Himself the full source and also the supreme and necessary end of His work. This independence is certainly wonderful and gives us the highest idea of God; then, when we turn our looks back on ourselves, we better understand the sovereign disinterestedness of the creative work: if God created us it is not because He had any need of us, but because He wished to make happy beings and to have those upon whom He could bestow His gifts. All this is wonderful, and in face of such majesty one can only kneel and adore. But at the same time one feels overwhelmed by this grandeur and this mystery: what is then the secret of this life,

infinitely distant from all other, yet which, at the same time, reveals itself as so prodigal of goodness towards these beings from whom it has nothing to expect?

The Son of God answers this question by revealing the mystery of the Trinity. The divine nature which, previously, could only be known externally through its works, He shows us in itself, in all the fulness of its life. God seemed to us solitary, we now perceive in Him this blessed society of Father, Son and Holy Ghost: we say "society," and at the same time feel how inadequate the term is to designate the ineffable union of these Three Persons who are only one nature, One only God.

They are really distinct from each other, but this distinction only exists in those relations wherein they are set over against each other, and at the same time, bound together. These relations are so necessary that no one of these Persons can, not only not exist, but even be intelligible without the others: the Father cannot be understood without the Son, any more than the Son without the Father, nor the Father and the Son without the Holy Ghost who is their mutual love. In this there is no question of succession or of evolution, but only an eternal life which pours itself out irresistibly and in an infinite love. What can be said in face of such a revelation, if not what was said by that apostle who penetrated

most deeply into this mystery: "God is Love"?

St. John immediately adds: "He who dwells in love, dwells in God and God in him." In fact, this mystery is not merely offered for our contemplation: the revelation of this secret would indeed be a special grace, but God goes much farther, He invites us to enter into this intimate association of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost "If any one love Me, he will keep My words: and My Father will love him and We will come to him, and make Our abode in him." Thus, while, to human reason, God appears so distant and so solitary, faith unveils in Him infinite reciprocity of love, and introduces the Christian into this life; from this lower world grace invites him to it —"May the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ and the love of God and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with you all"; in heaven this will mean eternal participation in the divine life.

From faith in the Trinity, Christians receive yet another benefit: "That they may be one as We are One" Christ prayed of His Father. That is, of course, an ideal that will always be infinitely beyond our reach, yet also one that ought to draw us ever nearer to the goal: for this is what Jesus said to His disciples: "Be perfect even as your heavenly Father is perfect." In both cases what He suggests for our imitation is

a goal infinitely distant, but also infinitely desirable. We shall never be perfect as God is, but we ought always to be reaching after that perfection; similarly our mutual union will never be more than moral harmony, a distant image of the unity of the divine nature; but it is towards this unity that it will be directed as towards the ideal goal that Christ assigned to it. In this connection St. Augustine recalls the words of St. Paul (Eph. iv. 3) exhorting the faithful to "keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace." In God, he says, this bond is the Holy Spirit Himself, the reciprocal love that unites the Father and the Son; we ought to imitate this union and thus attach ourselves to God and to each other; and the divine peace, which passeth all understanding, will be the ideal model of that peace which, in this world, will unite all Christians together.*

* De Trinitate, 6, 5, 7 (PL. 42, 927—928); Epist. 238, 3, 16 (32, 1044).

## CHAPTER II.

### THE REVELATION OF THE TRINITY IN THE LIFE OF JESUS CHRIST OUR LORD.

### § 1.

In beginning this sketch we pointed out the supreme importance that the Dogma of the Trinity has for Christians. From the commencement of the Church it has played this rôle: it gives to the Christian faith its distinctive character, and, in the sacrament of initiation—baptism—it appears in the foreground: in the formula of baptism it is explicitly betokened; it is recalled by the triple immersion; it is solemnly professed by the neophyte in the Symbol of Faith which the Church teaches him and which he recites.

If the origin of this belief be sought for, it may at once be stated that it is exclusively Christian. Many other dogmas were received by the Church from Judaism: e.g., the divine unity, the creation of the world by God, belief in the advent of the kingdom of God, and in the coming of the Messiah. It is true that even on these points the light of Christ has thrown fresh illumination, and it may be said that there is not a single article of the Jewish faith that Christianity has not elevated

and transfigured. But here it is not only a question of elevation or of fresh illumination; there is actually the revelation of a mystery hitherto unknown, and this is one of the reasons that make the Dogma of the Trinity distinctive of the Christian faith and marks it off from Judaism. The Fathers had a very clear comprehension of this and often repeated it. The Jews only knew divine unity, the revelation of the Trinity was reserved for Christians.

It must not, however, be concluded from this that the Old Testament had not in any way prepared men's minds for this revelation. Even before studying texts in detail, and only considering the ordinary course of Providence, it may be seen that so absolute a negation is very little likely to be true.

God does not proceed by sudden revolution, "The Kingdom of God is like seed." This was the constant law of its development in the time of the Patriarchs and the Prophets as it is now in the days of the Gospel. Is it not like this in the life of every man, especially of those who are most obedient to divine influence? Long beforehand, God deposits in their life germs that develop later on; they themselves rarely notice this silent action, but when the grain of mustard seed has grown up and become a tree, they love to rehearse in memory the whole story of its growth from the first day when the seed was sown. For example, is it not this that we

notice in the recollections of the Apostles as they are transmitted to us in the Gospel? " The Spirit shall bring to your remembrance all that I have said to you ": this promise of Christ was fulfilled to them, the Spirit brought back to their memory the teachings of the Lord, for long so ill understood by them, and even the details of those first meetings with Jesus, of which, previously, they had been so far from suspecting the value or the consequences upon their lives.

This is what the Church has done: knowing herself to be the veritable Israel, she considers as her own history all the past of the people of God; she has loved to follow in it the divine action preparing by degrees the way for Christ. And, knowing from her own experience the goal to which this long work was tending, she caught the underlying significance of many a fact and many a text. In the righteous of the Old Testament she recognised types—no doubt very faint and very incomplete—of the Just One Who was to come: collecting together all these fragmentary images she reconstructed them into a likeness of Him Whom she knew so well, but of Whom the Jews had hardly discerned a single feature clearly.

We cannot here go over all this work again, neither can we reproduce the texts in which the Fathers found a foreshadowing of the revelation of the Trinity. It would be quite beyond the limits of this sketch to

trace the history of the religious conceptions which, after the coming of Christ, were transformed by immediate contact with Him, and were developed along the lines of the theology of the Trinity. Thus it was with the conception of the Word of God and that of the Spirit of God. Each will take its noteworthy importance in Christian theology, and already both appear clearly enough in the Jewish religion, but as yet they have not the character of distinct Personalities. They will only arrive at that in the New Testament, and it will be time to consider them when we are studying the revelation of Christ and of the Apostles.

On the other hand, there are two religious conceptions of which the development is more rapid, viz.: the idea of the Messiah and that of Wisdom. At the period with which we are now dealing, both of these are still wrapped in many obscurities: essential characteristics such as the divinity of the Messiah and the personality of Wisdom will only be definitely fixed by Christianity; meanwhile, both of them have, in Jewish theology, sufficient prominence to attract our attention, and they will play so important a rôle in the Christian religion that it will be well at once to point out their significance and their bearing.

We know what the Messianic hopes of Israel were. Trusting to divine promises, they reckoned that the reign of Yahve would

be established over the whole of humanity; this was not to be a brutal domination imposed by conquest; it would be a sovereignty freely accepted by all men. For the establishment of this Kingdom the whole of Israel would work; but in its heart of hearts there was imaged a man elect of God—a son of David—who would gain over all peoples to Yahve and would govern them in His name. This Messiah—that is to say "Anointed of God"—is represented by certain prophets under such august traits that He clearly surpasses the common level of humanity. Isaiah (ix. 6) celebrating His birth, calls Him "Wonderful Counsellor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace." Micah (v. 2) sings of Him as He "whose origin is of old and goes back to the days of eternity." Daniel represents Him as sovereign Judge and eternal King: "I was watching these night visions, and behold on the clouds of Heaven there came one like a son of man, and He came up to the Ancient of days and was presented to him. And power was given Him, and glory and dominion; and all peoples, nations, and languages shall serve Him. His power is an everlasting power which will never be taken away from Him; and His reign is a reign which shall not be destroyed" (Dan. vii. 13—14). On the most solemn day of the life of Christ, He will be heard appealing to this text before His judges and applying it to Himself: "Soon you will see

the Son of Man sitting at the right hand of power and coming upon the clouds of Heaven" (Matt. xxvi. 64). This prophecy found an echo in Judaism: we read in the Book of Enoch (xlvi. 1—4):

> "And there I saw One who had a head of days and His head was white like wool, and with Him was another being whose countenance had the appearance of a man and His face was full of graciousness, like one of the holy angels. And I asked the angel who went with me and showed me all the hidden things, concerning that Son of Man; who He was and whence He was and why He went with the Head of Days? And he answered and said unto me, 'This is the Son of Man who hath righteousness, with whom dwelleth righteousness, and who reveals all the treasures of that which is hidden, because the Lord of Spirits hath chosen Him, and His lot before the Lord of Spirits hath surpassed everything in uprightness, and this Son of Man whom thou hast seen will arouse the kings and the mighty ones from their couches and the strong from their thrones, and will loosen the reins of the strong and grind to powder the teeth of the sinners.'"

A little farther on (xlviii. 2) the seer, still contemplating the Son of Man, describes Him under manifestly super-human traits:

> "And at that hour that Son of Man was named in the presence of the Lord of Spirits and His name before the Head of Days. And before the sun and the signs were created, before the stars of the heaven were made, His name was named before the Lord of Spirits. He will be a staff to the righteous on which they

shall support themselves and not fall, and He will be the light of the Gentiles and the hope of those that are troubled of heart. All who dwell on earth will fall down and bow the knee before Him and will bless and laud and celebrate with song the Lord of Spirits. And for this reason has He been chosen and hidden before Him before the creation of the world and for evermore. And the wisdom of the Lord of Spirits hath revealed Him to the holy and righteous, for He preserveth the lot of the righteous, because they have hated and despised this world of unrighteousness, and have hated all its works and ways in the name of the Lord of Spirits; for they are saved in His name and He is the avenger of their life."

No doubt, at the period when our Lord came this transcendent conception of the Messiah was neither universal nor exclusive: in other apocryphal apocalypses drawn up at this date, the Messiah plays a much humbler rôle or even totally disappears; and in reaction against Christianity, Judaism turned aside more and more from these lofty hopes.* But the preceding quotations suffice to show that these hopes were still living when Christ came: they also illumine the passages in the Gospel in which Jesus repre-

* Towards the middle of the second century, S. Justin makes the Jew Trypho say: "All of us are expecting a Christ who will be a man among other men" (Dial. 49); and a century later Origen writes: "No Jew will ever admit that any prophet has foretold the advent of a Son of God; what they say is that one day the Christ of God will come; and it is precisely on this topic of the Son of God that they usually attack us, denying that He exists or that any prophet has ever spoken of Him" (Contra Celsum 1, 49).

sents Himself as the Son of Man, and thus makes understood both His rôle as Messiah and His personal dignity.

By the side of this conception of the Messiah is found another very different conception, developed in quite other surroundings, but of which the influence on Trinitarian theology has been even greater: the conception of Wisdom. It is met with in the Book of Job (Ch. xv. & xxviii.) and in the Book of Baruch (Ch. iii. & iv.), but it is chiefly developed in the Wisdom literature, and it is there also that are found not only practical and moral considerations, but more—theological indications of very high significance.

In Proverbs, Wisdom is described as calling all men to her school and promising them great advantages.

" She stands at the top of high places, on the high road, at cross roads; near the gates, at the entrance to the town, wherever the crowd passes she makes her voice heard: Men, I call to you; to the children of men I address myself. Simple, learn prudence; fools, learn good sense. Listen, for I have splendid things to tell you and my lips are open to teach good " (viii. 2, 6).

After having made this appeal she introduces herself thus: " Yahve formed me at the beginning of his ways, before his works of old. Before the ages I was established from the beginning, before the creation of the earth. When there were no depths I was brought forth:

> when there were no fountains abounding with water. Before the mountains were settled, before the hills, I was brought forth: while as yet he had not made the earth nor the fields, nor the first grains of the dust of the world. When he established the heavens, I was there: When he set a compass to the face of the abyss; when he fixed a limit for the sea that the waters should not transgress his command; when he strengthened the foundations of the earth: I was with him as a child: I was daily his delight, rejoicing without ceasing in his presence; rejoicing on the globe of the earth" (viii. 22—31).

Then having thus retraced her rôle at Yahve's side even before the birth of the world, Wisdom again calls men to her school:—

> "Now my sons, hearken to me; for happy are they who keep my ways . . . . he who finds me has found life; he obtains the favour of Yahve. But he who sins against me wrongs his soul; those who hate me love death" (viii. 32—36).

In the chapter that follows, Wisdom is represented as having prepared a great feast in a palace that she has just built. She invites to it all the ignorant, all the foolish, in order to bestow on them intelligence and life. The scene recalls the Gospel Parable of the Feast. On the other side of the way is another table; Folly also hails the passers-by; she invites them to her table, in her house: "Stolen waters are sweet, and bread eaten in secret is pleasant" (ix. 17).

Throughout the whole of this fragment, a very large allowance must, of course, be made for poetic personification. Dame Folly is not an hypostasis, although she calls fools to her house; and the feast prepared by Wisdom, her invitations and her promises might also be interpreted as poetic allegory; but the speech which the sacred author puts into her mouth, and the rôle that he recognises as hers at Yahve's side before the Creation, have a different character. These are clearly not poetic imaginations but religious affirmations; and the other Books of Wisdom which take up and confirm these statements assure to them an enhanced value. In Ecclesiasticus (xxiv. 1—10) we read:

> "Wisdom praises herself and glorifies herself in the midst of her people. She opens her mouth in the assembly of the Most High and triumphs before His Power and glories in the presence of His Majesty." "I came out of the mouth of the Most High, and covered the earth like a mist. I fixed my tent on the highest places and my throne on a pillar of cloud. Alone I traversed the vault of heaven, and walked in the depths of the abyss. In the waves of the sea and on all the land, in every people and over every nation, I exercised dominion. Among all these I sought a place of rest and in what domain I could settle. Then the Creator of all things gave me His commands, and He who created me caused my tent to rest, and He said to me: 'Dwell in Jacob, have thy inheritance in Israel.' From the beginning and before all the ages I was created and I shall not cease

to be unto all eternity. I served before Him in the tabernacle and thus I established my dwelling in Sion."

This theology of Wisdom is found again in the Alexandrine book of the Wisdom of Solomon. There, again, as in Proverbs and Ecclesiasticus, are found practical rules of morality which especially attract the author's attention; but there is affirmed also, and with even greater clearness, the belief in Wisdom as a person united intimately with God, acting in the Creation, and more particularly upon humanity: "She dwells with God and the Lord of all things loves her; for it is she who initiates into the knowledge of God, and chooses among His works" (Ch. viii. 3—4). She guides men and has led the elect people with a solicitude full of power and goodness (Ch. x.) She is "the Artificer of all that exists" (viii. 6). "She is the breath of the Omnipotence of God, a pure emanation from the glory of the Almighty, therefore can no defiling pass upon her. She is the brightness of the everlasting light, the unspotted mirror of the energy of God, and the image of His goodness" (vii. 25—26).

In the Epistle to the Hebrews (i. 3) one sees how many of these expressions are borrowed, to be applied to the Son of God. No doubt the terms "breath," "refulgence," "brightness," "mirror," are only metaphors, and can but suggest to us some idea very far

from the divine reality; but they complete and correct each other, and, taken together, they forcibly express the intimate and necessary union which binds God to His Wisdom. It is in this way that they will be found contributing to fix the Christian tradition: in the anti-Arian controversy the Fathers were glad to make use of these texts of Wisdom, illuminated and made precise in the Epistle to the Hebrews.

The mere comparison of these documents marks the bond which here unites the Old Testament with the New: certainly it cannot be claimed that the theology of the Trinity is already formulated in the Wisdom literature; but some of the traits which contribute towards determining the conception of the Son of God are certainly recognisable in them. This influence may be also recognised in several of St. Paul's Epistles (1 Cor. i. 24; Col. i. 16, 17), and again in the Prologue of St. John.* Meantime, the comparison of these two series of texts suffices to make clear the difference; the theology of Wisdom, sublime and suggestive though it be, only becomes definite and tangible after the revelation of the Son of God incarnate in

* Mr. Rendel Harris in his very interesting investigations on the *Origin of the Prologue to St. John's Gospel* (Cambridge, 1917) has tried to carry this argument much further. He thinks that, from the first generation of disciples, Jesus was identified with Wisdom, and that this identification possibly had its source in a direct and explicit affirmation of Jesus: "I am Wisdom." It seems to me difficult to establish this point.

Jesus Christ. To guide faith with certainty towards so mysterious a goal, nothing less would serve than the appearance of God Himself and the pouring out of the Holy Ghost at Pentecost. Moreover, reading the Gospel is enough to show, how, notwithstanding the long preparation granted to the people of God, their hearts were far from being able to bear the full brilliance of the divine light: their weakness, their stumblings, their blunders in the presence of Jesus Christ is one of the saddest spectacles in the religious history of humanity; but it is through that that the wonderful benignity of Our Saviour shines out all the more, " Behold My Servant, whom I have chosen, My Beloved in whom My soul is well pleased: I will put My Spirit upon Him, and He shall announce judgment to the nations. He shall not strive nor cry; neither will any man hear His voice in the public places, He will not break the bruised reed, nor extinguish the still smoking flax until He has made Justice triumph. In His name shall the nations hope " (Matt. xii. 18—21).

## § 2.

St. Paul writing to the Ephesians, said to them: " You have, doubtless, been informed of the dispensation of the grace of God which has been given me for you; you know that it was by revelation that the mystery was

manifested to me, as I have just written briefly; and in reading me you will be able to recognise the understanding which I have of the mystery of Christ, Who in other ages was not made known to men as clearly as He is now revealed to His holy apostles and prophets" (Eph. iii. 2—5). This mystery is salvation, it is the incomprehensible riches of Christ, and all the benefits that He confers on His followers: all this is the subject of a fresh revelation, and the Apostle, like his followers, is conscious of a much better acquaintance with it than had the men who preceded them.

The historian of to-day cannot but confirm the judgment of the first Christians: between them and their predecessors the distance is immense: a new fact had supervened which illuminated and transfigured the whole religious faith of humanity: "After having spoken to our fathers by the prophets, God, in these last days has spoken to us by the Son." But even this revelation, made by Christ, was not instantaneous: it was developed gradually, and the Gospel clearly indicates these successive developments. Even on the last day of His life, Our Lord said to His disciples, "I shall yet have many things to say to you, but ye cannot bear them now. When, He, the Spirit of Truth is come, He will guide you into all truth" (John xvi. 12—13). As a matter of fact, in many places in his Gospel, St. John declares that neither he nor the

other apostles understood all that they saw and heard, and that only later on the Holy Ghost awakened their recollection and gave them understanding of these things.* These remarks apply with yet greater force to the teaching which Jesus gave to the crowd. "Unto you it is given to know the mystery of the Kingdom of God: but to them that are without, all these things are done in parables" (Mark iv. 11). This, however, is only a provisional arrangement, as Christ explains at the same time: "There is nothing hid that shall not be uncovered, nothing secret that shall not be brought into full light" (Mark iv. 22).

Thus the more intimate knowledge of the Kingdom and of Christ which, at first, the Apostles alone received, because they alone could bear it, would later on, be communicated by them to everyone; the Christian community would be led progressively towards the full light.

Even after the Ascension of Christ and after the Pentecost, the era of revelation was not closed. St. Paul could say to the Galatians: "The Gospel which I preached is not by any means according to man, since it is not from man that I received it or learned it: it is by revelation from Jesus Christ" (Gal. i. 11–12). Here, again, this revelation was not to be made perfect in a day:

* John xii. 16, xiv. 26, xvi. 4, ii. 22.

the sequence of St. Paul's Epistles shows the progress of his thought. In the early Epistles eschatological preoccupations are more in evidence; later, the principal subject of the Apostle's teaching is the question of faith and law; finally, above everything, is placed in full light the Person of Christ and His redemptive work. Analogous comment might be made when comparing the Apocalypse with the Gospel of St. John. Turning from one to the other, there is not only greater maturity, there is also deeper insight.

The progress of Christian revelation does not stop with the apostolic era, but, after this, it follows a quite different law of development: from this era no new revelation came to enrich the deposit of truth confided by God to His Church; there is only, on the part of the Church, progress in the understanding of this deposit, and in comprehension of the mysteries revealed by God. On the other hand, during the life of the Apostles, it is the revelation itself that progresses; God confides fresh secrets to His confidants, who, like good stewards of the house, drew plentifully of this treasure—of these mysteries old and new—and laid all in the hands of the Church.

It is, then, the progressive revelation, running through the New Testament, that we have to study here. This study may be pursued in two different ways: by tracing this progress as it is manifested in the docu-

ments that we have in our hands, or by using these documents in the endeavour to arrive at it in the facts that lay beyond and behind the records.

The first method will follow the order of witnesses; the second, the order of facts. No doubt the first is more prudent, but slower, and requires greater elaboration: the collective witness of the nascent Church must be studied first, be it in the catechetical instructions of the Apostolic Church, whence arose our Synoptic Gospels, or in the life and worship of the first Christians, especially as we know them from the Acts: then St. Paul's teaching must be expounded, and, finally, the theology of St. John as it appears in the Apocalypse and in the Fourth Gospel. This is the plan that has been followed by the author of these pages in his work on *The Origins of the Dogma of the Trinity:* he takes the liberty of referring to this book those readers who prefer this treatment of the subject. The present sketch is too brief to allow of thus following in all its details the testimony given by the first Christians to the revelation of the Trinity; we shall, therefore, endeavour, while relying on our previous studies, to arrive directly at the facts themselves, that is to say, we shall first show the manifestation of the Holy Trinity in the life of Christ, and then rapidly describe the subsequent revelation, especially as it appears in St. Paul.

One of the privileges of the Messianic era, as described by the prophets, was to be the pouring out of the Holy Ghost upon men. In the early days of the Church St. Peter recalled to the Jews the passage from Joel which contained—among many others—this promise: "I will pour out My Spirit upon all flesh, and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, and your old men shall dream dreams, and your young men shall see visions. Upon the slaves also and upon the handmaidens in those days I will pour out My Spirit."

It is, in fact, this outpouring of the Holy Ghost which from the first marks the advent of Christ. John the Baptist "shall be filled with the Holy Spirit" from his mother's womb; at the approach of Mary bearing in her womb the Infant Jesus, Elizabeth also "was filled with the Holy Spirit"; Zacharias, on the day of the circumcision of the Forerunner, is "filled with the Holy Spirit." Long ago, Simeon had received the promise of the Spirit, and it is by the Spirit that he is led into the Temple. Pentecost is not yet, but already Messianic days have dawned. Meantime, these various manifestations are effaced before another work of the Spirit of God, that which the angel came to announce to Mary.

St. Luke narrates that the angel having entered Mary's house, said to her: "Hail, full of grace, the Lord is with thee." She was troubled by

this saying, and asked herself what this salutation signified. And the angel said to her: "Fear not, Mary, for thou hast found grace with God, and behold thou shalt conceive in thy womb, and shalt bear a son, and shall give to Him the name of Jesus. He shall be great and shall be called the Son of the Highest and the Lord God shall give to Him the throne of His Father David and He shall reign over the house of Jacob for ever, and His Kingdom will have no end." And Mary said to the angel: "How can this be since I know not man?" And the angel answered her, "The Holy Spirit shall come upon thee, and the power of the Highest shall overshadow thee, therefore, the holy being which shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God."

This message of the angel is the decisive date for humanity. It is impossible to read this account without emotion, neither can one fail to be struck by the faithful simplicity of the narration.

Messianism appears here, not as it was later, expanded and developed in the Christian Church, but as it was conceived and hymned at the daybreak of Christianity, in the last years of Herod. The Messiah, the Son of God, appears here primarily as the Son of David, the eternal King of Israel. Later on the apostasy of the chosen people will bring into view, behind this first limited design, the boundless horizon of the Church.

Upon the Virgin Mary the Holy Ghost would come and the power of the Highest would overshadow her. This recalls the

cloud which, during the days of the Exodus, covered the habitation of Yahve with its shadow (Exod. xl. 34—38). It was these same recollections that the Apostle St. John called up somewhat differently when speaking of this same mystery of the Incarnation, "The Word was made flesh, and fixed His tent among us." God, in fact, does come, and more really than in the days of Moses. His habitation, the tabernacle in which He dwells, is the Virgin Mary whom the Holy Ghost has "overshadowed." The angel adds: "Therefore the holy being which shall be born of thee shall be called Son of God." This title which the Christian faith gives to Jesus Christ as His proper name, was not a Messianic title among the Jews: neither in the Old Testament nor in the Jewish Apocrypha do we find the Messiah called Son of God; therefore it is not Jewish tradition that has determined Christian faith on this point: on the contrary, it is faith in Jesus Christ which here transforms the Jewish hopes. The reading of the Gospel will show us the progressive development of this belief in Jesus the Son of God; in its first pages which we are now studying, the idea is attached to the miraculous conception; the continuation of the narrative will show the yet higher origin of this filiation.

Mary goes to see Elizabeth: at her approach Elizabeth is filled with the Holy Ghost and cries: "Blessed art thou among

women and blessed is the fruit of thy womb. And whence is this to me that the mother of my Lord should come to me?"

This is only a cry of wonder, but it presages great things; for the first time is heard the name of Lord applied to Christ: soon the angel announcing the birth of the child among the hills of Bethlehem, will also say: "There is born to you to-day a Saviour Who is Christ the Lord."

During the days of the conception and of the birth of the Saviour, divine manifestations were multiplied, but within the narrow circle of privileged persons: those whom God thus visits bless and celebrate Him in the Canticles that Christians of all centuries have loved to repeat.

The *Magnificat,* the *Benedictus,* the *Nunc Dimittis*—each of these canticles has its special note. The *Magnificat* is the tranquil and profound outpouring of that soul, the most intimately united to God that ever existed, in the presence of that gift of God, the greatest and most complete that could be conceived. In the *Benedictus* the priest of Yahve hails the era of righteousness and holiness about to open, and sees the holy people henceforth serving God and offering Him adoration that nothing will be able to sully nor disturb. In the *Nunc Dimittis* is heard the cry of Judaism grown old but still faithful; the old servant, who, for so many years, waited the consolation of Israel

and kept his attention fixed thereon, is at last relieved of his guard; the light so long hoped for at last has shone out; the watcher can depart in peace, his wishes are fulfilled. Across these depths of feeling we have the presentment of the revelation of some ineffable mystery: God has fulfilled the expectation of Israel, and comes to save all those who believe in Him.

Then, after these glorious manifestations, in which chosen witnesses had perceived such wonderful things, obscurity falls again upon the life of Jesus. There is the persecution of Herod, the flight into Egypt, the return to Nazareth; then come the childhood and youth of Jesus, long years of hidden life that so jealously guarded the mystery of God; save Mary and Joseph, not a soul suspected it. Once, and for a few hours only, is the veil raised: Jesus was then twelve years of age and accompanied His parents to the Temple. After their departure He remained there, listening to the Doctors and asking them questions, exciting their wonder by the intelligence of His replies. His parents found Him there, and Mary said to Him, " My Son, why hast thou dealt thus with us? Behold Thy father and I have sought Thee sorrowing." And He replied to them: " Why did you seek Me? Did you not know that I must occupy Myself with My Father's business?" But they did not understand what He said to them. And He went down to

Nazareth and was subject to them; and His mother kept all these sayings in her heart (Luke ii. 48—52). Before this (ii. 19) St. Luke has shown us Mary keeping in her heart, and pondering over, all the words of her Child; this gives an indication of the source of these narrations; they are Mary's recollections sacredly preserved in her heart. The humble Virgin wished it to be known that at first she had not understood her Son's words; doubtless she had cognizance of and adored His divine filiation, but she was to learn only progressively under what form His action on earth would be exercised and in what manner He would be employed about His "Father's business." Up to now He had lived with her, humble and submissive; but on this day, for the first time, He performed higher duties, and did so in complete independence, leaving her herself in ignorance and anxiety.

If it be true that Mary was only to understand her Son's mission on earth, and the duties that it comprised, progressively, there is nothing of the sort in the case of Jesus Himself: we never see ignorance, nor hesitation, nor sudden revelation.

From the first day He manifested Himself fully conscious of what He was and of what He had to do. Simply, yet authoritatively, He claimed His independence, He fulfilled His task, then returned quite naturally to the position He had chosen: He went back

to Nazareth, and took up again His life as the humble and submissive child.

All this, however, is only the prelude. The birth of Christ, His childhood, His secluded life at Nazareth, all this passes in mystery, it is the secret of a few intimate associates. "The beginning of the Gospel of Jesus Christ," according to St. Mark, is the preaching of John the Baptist and the Baptism. On the day of the Fore-runner's circumcision, his father, Zacharias, had thus predicted his rôle: "And thou little child, thou shalt be called prophet of the Highest; for thou shalt go before the face of the Lord to prepare His ways." Similarly, finding inspiration in the words of Isaiah (xl. 3) the three Synoptics also apply them to John the Baptist; it is his voice that cries "Prepare the way of the Lord, make straight His paths."*

The ministry of John, then, is but preparatory: he baptises, but he only baptises with water: Another comes, more powerful,

* In this text from Isaiah, as in that from Malachi (iii. 1), also quoted on this occasion, it was Yahve who was to come, and it was for Him that the Fore-runner had to prepare the ways.

The Evangelists apply these predictions to the coming of Christ; they expected the advent of God and they knew that His angel would come to mark out the way. John the Baptist appears: he is the Fore-runner. Jesus Christ comes, it is He Who is expected. The practice of the Christian religion, applying to the Lord Jesus, prophetic or other passages referring to Yahve, has been noticed before: here we find an example on the first page of the Gospel. Westcott — *Epistle to the Hebrews*, p. 91— remarks in reference to it, that these prophecies, thus

Who will baptise with the Holy Ghost and with fire. The Spirit, as we have already seen, was to be the great gift of the Messiah; therefore, it was Christ alone and not His Fore-runner Who must bestow it on His followers by baptism. In the early days of the Church the repentant Jews asked of St. Peter "What must we do?" And Peter replied to them: "Repent and be baptised . . . in the name of Jesus Christ . . . and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit." The same question was put to John the Baptist, but he could not make the same reply; he could not promise, to those whom he had baptised, the gift of the Spirit, he could only suggest to them a rule of life, recommend to them almsgiving and justice.

Meantime, Jesus Himself comes in His turn to receive baptism. John does not yet know Him, but, seeing Him approach intuitively perceives an incomparable holiness before which he is abashed. The baptism that he gives is penitential; there can be no question of penitence in the case of Him Who thus comes to him; "I have need to be baptised of Thee, and Thou comest to me!" Jesus answering said unto him: "Let it to be

fulfilled in Jesus Christ, "contributed to guide the apostles naturally, if the word may be used, to the apprehension of the depths of His being."

This observation is quite legitimate, only it may be added that the faith in Jesus Christ must have been of a very high order to evoke in the minds of the disciples such recollections and to adapt itself to them so readily.

so now, for it is fitting that we fulfil all righteousness."

This reply makes it quite clear that the Lord knew what He was, but that for the moment He wished to humble Himself before John, and to "fulfil all righteousness." He had willed to be circumcised, presented in the Temple, redeemed; His virgin mother had willed to be "purified." In the same spirit, with the same feeling, He asked baptism of John; He recognised its divine origin; thenceforth He loves the humiliation of it, as He loved the heavy burden of the law.

As Jesus was leaving the water after baptism, being in prayer, lo, the heavens were opened and the Holy Ghost descended in a bodily shape like a dove, and, at the same time, a voice was heard to say: "Thou art My beloved Son in Thee I am well pleased." This scene is one of the most solemn in the whole Gospel; it crowns the whole ministry of the Fore-runner, giving him the decisive revelation promised by God. A little later he said himself: "I saw the Spirit descend from heaven like a dove, and it rested upon Him. And I did not know Him; but He Who sent me to baptise in water had said to me 'He upon Whom thou shalt see the Spirit descend and remain, He it is Who baptises in the Holy Spirit.' And I saw, and I bare witness that this is the Son of God."

In this descent of the Holy Ghost and in this voice from heaven, there was more than

a sign given to the Fore-runner: there was God's warrant conferred on Jesus at the commencement of His ministry. This is seen in St. Luke's narrative, and still more clearly in that of St. Matthew: the celestial voice addresses the bystanders and introduces Jesus to them as the well-beloved Son. In St. Mark, on the other hand, it is to Jesus that the voice speaks, and it is Jesus Who sees heaven opened. These two forms of the narrative are not incompatible one with the other. Here, as in the scene of the Transfiguration, as in the celestial revelation reported elsewhere by St. John (xii. 28), as also in the appearance of Christ to St. Paul on the road to Damascus, the divine manifestation was, no doubt, perceived by many witnesses, but unequally; the less prepared were struck by the miracle without clearly perceiving its import; John the Baptist recognised in it the sign promised by God; Jesus felt in it the infinite sweetness of the love of the Father, and at the same time, the powerful impulsion of the Spirit which drove Him into the desert and pledged Him to His Messianic ministry. Here, as in the other two divine manifestations recalled above, at the Transfiguration and on the eve of the Passion, the celestial voice was heard after the prayer of Jesus; it is as if a solemn response were made to it: at the moment of announcing the Kingdom of His Father and bringing about its advent, Jesus prayed to

Him, and the Father repeated to Him the infinite pleasure that He took in Him.

This was also the first solemn manifestation of the Holy Trinity: later on it was affirmed in Christian baptism by the formula that Our Lord taught His disciples: "Go, teach all nations, baptising them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit." In the baptism of Christ it was already revealed, though, doubtless, the revelation would only be understood later by the Christians whom Christ would have instructed, and those to whom the Holy Spirit would give inner illumination; they would then turn back to this first day of Our Lord's public life and would delight to recognise in it the first manifestation of the Christian mystery of God the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.*

Immediately after baptism, Jesus was driven by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted of the Devil. He remained there

* *The Gospel of the Nazarenes*, quoted by St. Jerome (Isaiam ii. 2) thus recounts the divine manifestation: "And it chanced that when the Lord had gone up out of the water, the plenitude of the Holy Ghost came down and rested upon Him, and said to Him: My Son, in all the prophets I awaited Thy coming to repose Myself in Thee for Thou art My rest, Thou art My first-born Son, Thou Who reignest in eternity." *The Gospel of the Ebionites* quoted by St. Epiphanius (Hær. xxx. 13) also offers notable and intentional divergences: "When the people had been baptised, Jesus also came and was baptised of John. And when He came up out of the water the heavens opened and He saw the Holy Spirit in the form of a dove who came down and entered into Him. And a voice was heard from heaven, saying: Thou

forty days, fasting, praying and repulsing temptation. Later on, the author of the Epistle to the Hebrews writes of this as follows: "He had to become in everything like His brothers, that He might be, near God, a compassionate and faithful High Priest, interceding for the sins of the people. For having Himself suffered temptation, He is able to bring succour to those who are tempted" (Heb. ii. 17—18); and lower down

art My well beloved Son in Whom I am well pleased. And again: I have begotten Thee to-day.

"And immediately a great light shone over the place and John having seen it, said, Who art Thou, Lord? And again a voice from heaven was heard by him: That is My well beloved Son in Whom I am well pleased. Then John, falling at His feet, said to Him: I beg Thee, Lord, baptise me. But He would not, and replied: Let be, for thus it becometh us to fulfil all things." Elsewhere yet other passages of the same kind may be found—e.g. St. Justin also reports (Dial. 88) that when Jesus descended into the water, a great fire lighted up over the Jordan. These variations are mere naïve embroideries with which the authors of apocryphal Gospels were pleased to decorate the fabric—too simple for their taste—of our Gospels.

But it will also be noticed that side by side with these imaginary details, there is intentional touching up, especially in the Gospel of the Nazarenes: the Spirit expecting Christ in all the prophets and finally resting upon Him, is a conception very closely resembling Judæo-Christian conceptions, such as are met with, for example, in the Clementine collections, where Jesus appears rather as the great Prophet than as the Son of God.

It is probably an analogous conception that brings into the Gospel of the Ebionites the passage from the Psalms "I have begotten Thee this day." Our view, like that of the authors of the Canonical Gospels, is that the scene of baptism is not for Jesus Christ the point of departure of His divine Sonship, which is eternal, it is only one manifestation of it at a time when it expressed a fresh consecration of His Person for the Messianic rôle that He was about to undertake.

(iv. 15): "We have not a High Priest who cannot compassionate our weaknesses, having been tempted in all ways in order to become like us, except for sin."

This mystery of the temptation of the Son of God is for us one of the most touching features of the Gospel, one of those in which Our Saviour appears nearest to us, truly man, truly bearing all our infirmities, except sin, and thus capable of understanding and healing them all. This is also one of the decisive episodes of Gospel history: Jesus is just beginning His ministry as the Messiah, as the Son of God, but under what conditions and following how strange a road! We recall how scandalised St. Peter was at Cæsarea Philippi: the Lord foretold to His Apostles all that He would have to suffer, but Peter, although he had just recognised Him as the Son of God, could not endure this revelation. He took his Master aside and said to Him: "God forbid, Lord, this shall never happen unto Thee." But Jesus, turning round, said to Peter, "Get thee behind me Satan, thou art an offence unto Me; for thou thinkest not as God does but as men do."

What the devotion of St. Peter, so sincere, though as yet so unenlightened, could not endure, was certainly not to be endured by the disciples and the mass of the Jews, and in that lies the whole significance of the scene of temptation.

Spectacular miracles like the descent from the pinnacle of the Temple, or, still more impressive, universal dominion; were not these things, in the eyes of the crowd, the very appanage of the Messiah? Of course Satan betrayed himself in claiming worship, but beyond the insolent tempter Christ beheld the immense crowd of carnally-minded Jews, who, at the mere name of Messiah, dreamed of prodigies and power.

" If Thou be the Christ, give us a sign in heaven." " If Thou be the Christ, tell us and we will follow Thee." " If Thou be the Christ, come down from the Cross." It would be necessary gradually to undeceive these crowds and without extinguishing the spark of faith that still glimmered in the detritus, to reveal to them, little by little, a suffering Messiah, a crucified Messiah, Who, for the greater number of them, would be only a stumbling block, Who, nevertheless, would be the only Saviour.

Through the whole course of His ministry, Jesus would feel that the doctrine He preached was too simple for His hearers, and the Messianism that He represented too divine. Not only would His dearest disciples be disconcerted at His precepts on the sanctity of marriage, for example, or on the forgiveness of injuries, but they would be discouraged by His very favours. When He promised the Eucharist, when He announced that He would give His flesh to eat and His blood

to drink, He heard murmured all round Him: "This is a hard saying; who can bear it?" and He felt His loneliness closing in round Him.

During these forty days Christ had seen all this. Looking before Him, beyond the palm groves of Jericho, beyond the sombre swelling of the marl dunes, He saw the green line of the Jordan. There, among the willows and the tamarisks, crowds were pressing round John: eagerly, feverishly they did violence to the Kingdom of God and forced an entrance into it: yet how few suspected the profound and utter renunciation that it demanded, and how few would have the courage to submit to it. Had Jesus lowered its demands, had He offered them the Kingdom of their dreams, what enthusiasm He would have stirred up, what a unanimous irresistible *élan*. All that, Jesus saw, and from it turned away His eyes. The Gospel that He brought would only blind the proud; but to simple, humble souls, it would reveal God and His Christ, and Jesus was satisfied with this mysterious arrangement. "I give Thee thanks, O Father," He would soon say, "Lord of Heaven and earth, that Thou hast hidden all this from the wise and prudent and that Thou hast revealed it to little children. Even so, My Father, such has been Thy good pleasure."

From the scene of the temptation, every reader of the Gospel should draw the instruc-

tion implied in it. Remembering that Christ had to deal with a blind and carnal people, whom the name Messiah inflamed, but deceived; whom the name Son of God could only scandalise; the precautions, the delays, the reservations in Christ's teaching will be comprehended without difficulty: before showing the light, He had to unseal the eyelids; before instructing, He had to convert.

This lesson will be found explicitly given by the Evangelists in connection with the parables of the Kingdom, but it should always be kept in mind, otherwise we may look in the Gospel for categorical affirmations which would, possibly, be very valuable for us, but which for Christ's auditors could only have been enigmas and occasions of falling. There is yet another lesson to be drawn: this Messianism, so sublime to faith, so disconcerting to human ambition, could only be understood by little children; the wise and prudent were mystified by it. The Gospel is just the same to-day and human nature has not changed; if it approaches the Gospel with ambition and arrogance, it is blind to it: it can only be accepted by the simple docility of children. We see then that Christ's preaching begins with moral instruction; at first He never propounds the mysteries of Christian dogma, His own divinity, His substantial Unity with the Father; but He preaches the ideal Christian life—humility, poverty, gentleness, forgiveness of

injuries, the spiritual religion which prays and works in secret: later He urges His disciples to put all that into practice in order not to build upon the sand and see the whole edifice give way. In short one must live the truth to reach the light. This is the keynote of Christ's pedagogy; to those who find the Gospel obscure and who cannot distinguish therein the divine features of the Lord, the suggestion is made that they should read over the Sermon on the Mount; let them steep their minds and their lives in it, and gradually everything will become clear.*

The beginning of Christ's ministry resembles that of John the Baptist; its aim is to prepare the Jews for the approaching advent of the Kingdom. It is thus that St. John depicts it in Judæa where Jesus baptised (John iii. 22), it is also thus that it appears in Galilee on His return: "The time is fulfilled and the Kingdom of God is near: repent and believe the Gospel," (Mark i. 15). Certain disciples join the Master; He does not trace out for them a whole programme beforehand, nor does He explicitly declare either His nature or His mission, but He lets them catch a glimpse of wonderful things: "Come," said He to Simon and

* One recalls the contrast set up by Ed. Hatch on the first page of his *Hibbert Lectures* between the Sermon on the Mount and the Symbol of Nicea. This contrast is factitious and it may be said without paradox that the Sermon on the Mount is itself the best introduction to the Symbol of Nicea.

Andrew, "I will make you fishers of men." Here, as throughout his Gospel, St. John adds to these "calls" by Jesus some more intimate and deeper touches. An illustration of this is the declaration made by John the Baptist to his disciples, when, seeing Jesus pass, he says to them "Behold the Lamb of God." Another illustration is given in Christ's promise to Nathaniel. "Thou shalt see greater things: in truth, I say it to you, you will see heaven open, and the angels of God ascending and descending upon the Son of Man" (John i. 50—51). No doubt under these symbolic phrases, under these Old Testament images, some great mystery is hidden, but the time to unveil it is not yet.

The work of evangelisation commences; Jesus exhorts, teaches, heals, and little by little He reveals Himself.

The Sermon on the Mount may be taken to sum up all the early preaching of Christ; it is the "Great Charter" of the Kingdom. The direct object of this teaching is Christian perfection; it is set forth at first in the Beatitudes as the ideal after which we should strive, then it is compared with the Old Law which it is to perfect and consummate. In all this Christ remains in the background; He does not preach Himself. One of the Fathers who studied the Gospel with the greatest perspicacity — St. Chrysostom —

dwells upon this reserve of Christ*, but, at the same time, he points out how He reveals Himself implicitly by the authority of His teaching. Commenting on the words of the Saviour, "It was said by the elders; but I say to you," S. Chrysostom writes:

"What prophet has ever spoken thus? What righteous man? What patriarch? Not one. They all said 'Thus saith the Lord.' Not so speaks the Son. They were communicating the orders of their Master; He, the orders of His Father. And when I say those 'of His Father,' I mean at the same time His own; for, said He, 'all that is Mine is Thine, and all that is Thine is Mine.'"

They communicated these orders to their companions in servitude, He, to His own servants.†

This authority of Christ's word always

* Hom. 16, 1—2 (PG. 57, 240), "Christ willed generally, to speak of Himself humbly, leaving it to others—to His Apostles—to make known the sublime mysteries": and he thus explains this reserve: "If the Apostles, who heard His teaching day and night, who saw His miracles; to whom He privately explained His parables, to whom He gave power to raise the dead; whom He had made so thorough as to leave all to follow Him; if these men, arrived at such a degree of excellence, had not the force to 'bear' the full revelation before the gift of the Spirit, what of the Jewish people, who were without knowledge, who had not this excellence, who were only casual witnesses of what Christ said and did? If Jesus had not constantly employed prudence and reserve towards them, would not this people have regarded Him as the enemy of God?"

Cf. Hom. 18, 4 (269); Hom. 22, 2 (301); etc.

† Hom. 16, 5 (245).

struck His auditors: "When He had finished these utterances," says St. Matthew, after the Sermon on the Mount, "the crowd was struck by His teaching, because He taught as one having authority and not as their Scribes." Taking up, one after another, all the great commandments of the Law, on homicide, adultery, divorce, the oath, patience, love of one's neighbour, Christ makes them more urgent and more personal, and every time it is the same formula of sovereign authority; "You have heard that it was said by the Elders, but I say to you." He disposes of all tradition as a sovereign, and, addressing Himself to the consciences of men, He speaks to them as a Master.

Already, in the Beatitudes, the way in which Jesus announces and exalts persecution may be noticed: "Blessed are you when men outrage and persecute you, and say all manner of evil against you falsely, because of Me." To sacrifice one's life for Christ: that is eternal happiness. Not less striking is the scene from the judgment with which the Sermon ends.

"Many will say to Me in that day, Lord, Lord, is it not in Thy name that we have prophesied, and in Thy name that we have cast out devils, and in Thy name that we have done many miracles? And then will I declare unto them, I never knew you: withdraw from Me, you that do evil" (Matt. vii. 22, 23).

Thus at the Last Day, the only hope of men will be in Him; to be known of Him, this will be life eternal; not to be known of Him will be damnation.*

These observations, suggested by reading the Sermon on the Mount, are confirmed by the whole Gospel. The impression on the crowd, noted by St. Matthew after the Sermon, is reported by St. Mark at the first preaching of Jesus in the synagogue at Capernaum: "His teaching struck them with astonishment, for He taught them as one having authority and not as the scribes" (Mark i. 22). Every reader to-day receives the same impression; the sovereign dominion that Jesus exercises over minds is very striking. He claims everything for Himself knowing that everything is owed to Him, and that He is able to compensate for everything: "Whoever loves father or mother more than Me is not worthy of Me: whoever loves son or daughter more than Me is not worthy of

* Cf. C. W. Votaw, *Sermon on the Mount*, Dictionary of the Bible, 5, 43b, n. 3: "This passage is only one of a number where Jesus appears as claiming the Divine prerogative of Judge at the Final Judgment (Matt. xxv. 31—46; x. 32f.; xi. 27—30; Mark viii. 38; Luke xx. 18; cf. John v. 27—xii. 48; Acts xvii. 31; Rom. ii. 16; 2 Cor. v. 10); a function appropriate to the Messiah. It would require a radical treatment of the Gospel narratives to explain this idea of Jesus as Judge as an exaggerated apostolic appreciation of Him. The uniqueness of Christ in mission, person, teaching and career—in other words, His Divinity—cannot well be denied by a serious historical interpretation of the Gospels, and, when this uniqueness is recognised, it is not difficult to admit Jesus' 'office as Judge.'"

Me: whoever carries not his cross after Me is not worthy of Me: whoever guards his life shall lose it: whoever will lose his life for My sake shall find it" (Matt. x. 37, 39).

Commenting on these words and those which precede, Mr. Plummer writes:* "Again we have a claim which is monstrous if He Who makes it is not conscious of being Divine. Who is it that is going to own us or renounce us before God's judgment seat? (Matt. x. 32—33). Who is it that promises with such confidence that the man who loses his life for His sake shall find it? And these momentous utterances are spoken as if the speaker had no shadow of doubt as to their truth, and as if He expected that His hearers would at once accept them. What is more, thousands of Christians, generation after generation, have shaped their lives by them and have proved their truth by repeated experience."

At the same time as Christ demands for Himself a devotion thus absolute, He makes promises that no one but Himself could fulfil: "Come to Me all you that are outworn and crushed down, and I will comfort you. Take My yoke upon you and learn

* *An Exegetical Commentary on the Gospel according to St. Matthew* (London, 1909), p. 157, cf. ib. p. 130, on St. Matthew viii. 22 (Let the dead bury their dead): "Who is it that with such quiet assurance makes such claims upon men?" (on Matt. x. 37—39), and p. 197.

that I am gentle and humble in heart, and you shall find rest for your souls, for My yoke is easy and My burden is light" (Matt. xi. 28—30). Here, again, the experience of all Christians for twenty centuries has confirmed the promise: they have taken upon them the yoke of Christ, and, in bearing it, have learned to love it; they were troubled and they have found peace; heavy-laden, they have found rest. Who, not a God, could exert such an empire over souls and give them so profound a peace?

The final judgment will but ratify this influence of Christ upon the souls of men: in the Sermon on the Mount Jesus already manifests Himself as He Who will judge mankind at the Last Day. This teaching finds confirmation in the whole Gospel, particularly in the parables of the Kingdom of God, and yet more particularly in the explanation of them given by Jesus to His Apostles, e.g., it is the Son of Man Who sows the good seed, it is He also, Who, at the Last Day, will preside over the harvest; He will send His angels and they will gather out of His Kingdom all things that offend, and all those which work iniquity, and will cast them into the fiery furnace (Matt. xiii. 37—42).

The same teaching is given in the parable of the seed as it appears in St. Mark (iv. 26—29). Christ casts the seed into the

ground, He lets it spring and grow up, later He returns to gather in the harvest.*

In the last period of His ministry, when Jesus multiplies the warnings of the supreme judgment that would end all things, it is still Himself Who appears as the Sovereign Judge: "He shall come in the glory of His Father with His angels and then He shall render unto every man according to His works" (Matt. xvi. 27); "All the races of the earth shall see the Son of Man coming upon the clouds of heaven with power and great glory. And He shall send His angels with a great sounding trumpet, and they shall gather together His elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other" (xxiv. 30—31). This rôle is most fully described in the Judgment scene as it is depicted by St. Matt. (Chap. xxv.): "When the Son of Man shall come in His glory and all the angels with Him, then shall He sit upon His glorious throne: and all nations shall be gathered together before Him: and He shall separate men one from another, as a shepherd divides the sheep from the goats; and He shall set the sheep on His right, and the

* P. Lagrange, in his *Commentaire sur S. Marc*, p. 114, comments thus on this parable: "As soon as the disciples had recognised Him as Messiah and Judge, they would necessarily see in Him the Harvester. And when He had disappeared, leaving the Kingdom of God destined to spread, the Apostles would understand that this Kingdom that they preached would continue to develop without the presence of the Master, who would only come again at the last to gather in the harvest."

goats on His left. Then shall the King say to those on His right, Come, you blessed of My Father, take possession of the Kingdom which has been prepared for you from the creation of the world; because I was hungry, and you gave Me wherewith to eat; I was thirsty and you gave Me drink" (xxv. 31—46).

In this most solemn scene one notices, not only the majesty of the King seated in the midst of His angels and judging all men; but even more the motive of the sentence: the whole moral life of humanity centres round Jesus; all that a man has done of good or evil, has been done to Him, and it is on that basis that he will be judged.

This rôle of Christ as judge of all mankind, is not only attested by certain passages in the Gospel, it is asserted positively in the faith of the primitive Church: belief in the Parousia of Christ is one of its strongest features; it appears clearly in the Synoptics; it permeates all the apostolic writings. Now the object of this belief is the return of Christ, coming at the end of time to judge all men. In Judaism, this prerogative was reserved for God; He it was Who was expected at the last day; the Parousia would be His coming, the day of the Lord, the day of His visitation. Christians have not repudiated this belief, and sometimes, especially in the Apocalypse (xx. 11—15), the judgment is described as belonging to God; but more

often it is Christ Who is expected as the Sovereign Judge, and these two conceptions are never opposed to each other: the same action is common to the Father and to the Son: the most divine actions, like the resurrection of the dead, and especially the resurrection of Christ, may be attributed with equal veracity to either;* thus the divine right of judging is recognised as belonging properly both to God the Father and to Christ the Son of God.†

The great religious impulse which draws the whole Christian Church towards the Christ whose return she awaits, the hope and desire for the Parousia of the Lord, make better understood the definitive rôle that she recognises as His. The messengers of John came to ask Jesus: "Art Thou He that should come or should we look for another?" For all disciples of Christ the question is settled: they have nothing to await if not the return of their Master. Until then, all who had spoken in the name of God—

* In St. Paul, the Resurrection of Christ appears as the work of the Father: Rom. iv. 24; viii. 11; x. 9; 1 Cor. vi. 14; xv. 16; 2 Cor. iv. 14; Gal. i. 1; Ephes. i. 20; Col. ii. 12; 1 Thess. i. 10. St. John (ii. 19) attributes it to the Son; the two expressions are used impartially in the Epistle of St. Ignatius to the Smyrnæans, ii. and vii. 1.

† Cf. the note of H. B. Swete on Apoc. xx. 11. "That the Father will be the supreme Judge of mankind is a doctrine which seems to join direct issue with John v. 21, and, indeed, with the whole current of early Christian tradition; but a reconciliation of the two views may be found in the oneness of the Father and the Son (Jo. x. 30) —When the Son acts, the Father acts with and through Him (Jo. v. 19)."

prophets and precursors—had come to announce the future and to prepare for it: throughout the Old Testament, the saints directed all their desires towards an end promised by God, towards His Kingdom, towards His Messiah.

Now they sang the *Nunc Dimittis,* and the Lord Himself explicitly confirmed this transformation of the religious life of Israel: "The law and the prophets were until John: since that time the Kingdom of God is declared" (Luke xvi. 16); and elsewhere, speaking to His disciples: "Blessed," said He to them, "are the eyes which see the things that you see: for I tell you that many prophets and kings have desired to see those things which you see and have not seen them, and to hear those things that you hear and have not heard them" (Luke x. 23—24).

True, the work is not consummated; the Kingdom of God planted by Jesus like a seed in the land of Israel, will germinate and grow, but slowly; still, there is no question of another King Who shall inaugurate it: He Who now sows will return later for the harvest; He must be awaited with vigilance and fidelity as by good servants who would not be taken unawares by the unlooked for return of the Master; as by wise virgins whose lamps, full of oil, are always bright in expectation of the Bridegroom.

These characteristics, which, from the beginning, Jesus impressed upon His Church,

are ineffaceable. Every Christian knows that the work of God is not consummated; he is saved by hope; he waits, he groans, he longs; each day he repeats his prayer, "Thy Kingdom come!" For two thousand years the whole Church has unweariedly echoed the supreme cry of the Seer of the Apocalypse: "Come, Lord Jesus." But this intense desire has not been directed towards any other; He Who is thus called, is He Who has already come. Long ago Tertullian wrote in opposition to the heretics of his day: "After knowing Jesus Christ we have no need of curious research; having received the Gospel we have no need of further investigations. From the moment we believe, there is no need of believing anything further; for the first article of our faith is that there is nothing which we ought to believe besides." What Tertullian here affirms, the whole Church has believed from the beginning: Christian Revelation is definitive, as are also Redemption and Salvation.

The essential features of the religion of the Gospel are, or, at least, ought to be, above all controversy: they are, in fact, not merely deeply graven in certain isolated passages, but are woven into the whole of our Gospels, and still better, into the whole faith and life of the primitive Church. But who can fail to see the bearing of all this? This Master Who appears to us so truly human, so sincere, so humble, so mindful of the value

of souls, and, beyond all that, so jealous of the rights of God—He it is Who imposes Himself upon us with a sovereign authority, Who claims for His service all there is in us of the most personal and most sacred, Who offers Himself as the end to which all our actions must tend if they are to be good and just, as the Judge upon Whom the endless destiny of all of us will depend: in short, it is towards Him that all mankind stretches out its hands, and Who will, in fact, consummate all its hope.*

## § 3.

In the preceding sketch, we have considered the Person of Christ as it is involved

* Cf. L. de Grandmaison, art. *Jesus Christ* dans le *Dictionaire Apologétique de la Foi Catholique*, Col. 1597: "The line of demarcation, clear to the eyes of every man who is not seduced by the pantheist mirage, . . . . unquestionably leaves Jesus of Nazareth on the divine side. In this perspective we can clearly understand that to know the Son, nothing less is necessary than infinite knowledge of the Father; we understand the boundless importance attributed by Jesus to His mediation, to His blood, to His work; we worship (which here is the sole alternative to condemnation) these extraordinary demands, this confidence placed in the love of the Master, set forth as supreme and purifying by its intrinsic power. Outside this perspective we have nothing but forced and one-sided interpretations, intemperate promises, extravagant ambition, unjustifiable acts. It is not merely the exegesis of the texts, it is the psychological probabilities which incline us to the perspective indicated.

"Superiority in equilibrium, moral and intellectual soundness manifested at their very highest, the limpidity of a very pure soul joined to the consciousness of the most extraordinary mission, all these traits concur to dismiss the hypothesis of hyperbolic and sacrilegious pretensions maintained up to death and even in death itself."

in every part of the religion of the Gospel.

Thus was it manifested at first to the disciples, and it is thus that we can still approach it most certainly to-day. Steeping one's self in the religion that Jesus preached, one is prepared to understand Him Himself. More than that, it is relatively easy for an honest and sincere mind to discern the origin and bearing of this religion, with its mass of obligations and promises, and to recognise in Christ the divine authority which imposes these obligations and which consecrates these promises.

Nevertheless, there are not wanting in the Gospel, declarations yet more explicit and more direct, and these must now be considered. The first thing to be noticed under this heading is the humble and prudent reserve of Christ. All round Him people became impassioned, they acclaimed Him with enthusiasm, trying to bear Him away at their head; or, on the other hand, they were jealous of Him, strove with Him, persecuted Him: He kept Himself at an equal distance from both—"He knew what is in man." When He approached the possessed to deliver them, the demons recognised Him: "Thou art the Son of God"; but He forbade them to speak.* He behaved in the same way towards those whom He healed: it seems as

* "He cast out many devils, but did not permit them to speak, because they knew Him" (Mark i. 34), cf. Mark iii. 12; Luke iv. 41.

if His compassion drew Him on farther than He wished to go; but that at least He strove to suppress the *éclat* of His works. At the beginning of His ministry, having healed a leper, He said to him: "Keep thyself from speaking of it to anyone" (Mark i. 44). Thus, in all His action, is noticed the same characteristic of manifestation and of reserve.* The motives for this reserve are already known to the reader. When Jesus began to preach, He encountered among the people whom He addressed, so false, yet so impassioned a conception of the rôle of the Messiah, that it was obligatory to reform His auditors' belief before appealing to it; but there was also in Jesus Himself a deeper reason for this attitude: He is the Messiah, humble and gentle, the Servant of Yahve, who does "not strive nor cry; whose voice is not heard in the public place, who does not break the bruised reed, nor quench the still smoking flax" (Matt. xii. 19—20). So, in His preaching to the people, He seeks first the moral reform of His hearers. In the parables by the side of the lake, He will begin to expound the mystery of the Kingdom of God, but He will do this under a parabolic form, which, while exhibiting the truth, veils it, thus avoiding the wounding of eyes too weak, and at the same time, by the

* Cf. W. Sanday, *The Injunctions of Silence in the Gospels*, in "The Journal of Theological Studies," 5, 321—329, esp. p. 322.

mystery itself, stirring up the curiosity of His audience. Yet in this setting forth of the Messianic mystery, it is the Kingdom that is revealed more than the King; His Person remains in the background of His work. When He speaks of Himself, He generally describes Himself by the expression at once humble and mysterious: "The Son of Man."

This formula is already met with in many books of the Old Testament, and in the Judaic literature, either merely to signify "a man," or, in some passages, to point out the Messiah.*

In the time of Our Lord this expression does not seem to have had necessarily, and of itself, a Messianic signification; but by previous uses of it, it was particularly susceptible of this signification. Moreover, Jesus, in applying it to Himself, did not even by that means and from the first day

* In Biblical Hebrew, the expression "Son of Man" appears fairly often, especially in the poetic books, and signifies not the son of some particular man, but a descendant of the human race, a member of humanity; it is frequently in parallel texts the counterpart of "man." In Aramaic this expression is yet more frequent, as well in prose as in poetry, and it is simply equivalent to "man." In Dan. vii. 13, the Messiah is thus described: "I beheld in the night visions, and upon the clouds of heaven came a son of man, and went up to an aged one, and they brought Him before Him. And there was given Him dominion, glory, and reign, and all peoples, nations and languages shall serve Him. His dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and His Kingdom shall never be destroyed." This expression is revived in the Book of the Parables of Enoch (En. xxxvii. 70) and frequently applied to the Messiah.

reveal Himself; but by the use that He made of the expression, He gradually gave to it a more definite and fuller meaning.

The earliest passages are the least explicit; from this time, however, Jesus associates this expression with some of the strongest assertions of the right to forgive sins (Mk. ii. 10), and of His lordship over the Sabbath (Mk. ii. 28). Towards the end of the ministry of Jesus, after St. Peter's confession, the Master's declarations are more numerous and more explicit. The title Son of Man, which, from that time He applies to Himself more frequently, very often calls up in His mind the thought of His sufferings,—"It is necessary that the Son of Man suffer many things, as did John the Baptist" (Matt. xvii. 12—13). "He shall be delivered into the hands of men and put to death" (Mark ix. 31), and yet more often the thought of His glorious return.* Christ is almost always

* One or two passages of this kind, before the scene at Cæsarea Philippi, can be referred to, especially in the interpretation of the parables of the Kingdom given to the Apostles: "The Son of Man shall send His angels, and they shall take out of His Kingdom all offences" (Matt. xiii. 41). From the day of the confession of St. Peter, these passages are very numerous: the most solemn of all is the reply of Jesus to Caiaphas: "Hereafter you shall see the Son of Man sitting at the right of the Almighty and coming upon the clouds of heaven" (Matt. xxvi. 64).

In all these texts, particularly in this last, a reminiscence of the prophecy of Daniel is very noticeable. The connection thus established helps us to understand why Jesus chose this Messianic title by preference. He took Messianism out of the narrow framework of Judaism, and

careful to bring the two perspectives together, thus preserving His disciples equally from the depression that the Passion might produce, and the exaltation that might arise from the glorious scenes of the Parousia.

Besides, it was ignominious death that would be the price of glory, and thus these two aspects of Christ's destiny were closely united as merit and recompense: "It was necessary that Christ suffered, and entered thus into His glory" (Luke xxiv. 26).

The Passion, the Parousia—these are the two phases of the life of Christ that the title Son of Man especially suggested to the disciples, and still brings before us to-day. Certain texts—less numerous—give a glimpse of another perspective: that of pre-existence in heaven. This is seen very clearly in some words of Christ reported by St. John: "No one has ascended up to heaven, but He that came down from heaven, the Son of Man Who is in heaven" (Jo. iii. 13). "And when you shall see the Son of Man ascend up where He was formerly" (Jo. vi. 62). Doubtless it is this pre-existence that must be alluded to in certain passages of the Synoptic Gospels: "The Son of Man has come not to be served, but to serve, and to give His life for the redemption of very

assured for it a universal human import, such as it had in Daniel. He evoked at one and the same time, the recollection of these visions, and a foresight of the glorious Parousia.

many" (Matt. xx. 28).* "The Son of Man is come to seek and to save that which was lost" (Luke xix. 10). The formula "is come" taken alone, is not decisive; but as it is here used, applied to the Son of Man and having for its object His Messianic rôle, it seems to signify, in the thought of Jesus, His mission, which had for its starting point His pre-existence by His Father in Heaven, just as it will have for its end His glorious appearance in Heaven at the right hand of God.

Thus, then, the Messianic title, Son of Man, which Jesus chose, revealed at the same time His humility and His supereminence, while His pre-existence and His unity with the Father are more clearly indicated by the name of Son, or Son of God, which Jesus also adopted, and which, from the first Christian generation became His characteristic personal title. It is also by the manifestation of this divine filiation that the Dogma of the Trinity is revealed to us. To apprehend that Jesus has appeared to us in His life, His teaching, His death, His resurrection, as our God, is certainly to begin to understand the Gospel; but its full mystery cannot be penetrated unless one beholds in Him the Son of God, ineffably united to His

* Plummer (p. 280) notes on this text: "The Son of Man came" implies the pre-existence of the Son; it is not a mere synonym for being born (xviii. 11; Luke ix. 56; xix. 10) cf. Lagrange on Mark ii. 17 (p. 40).

Father, and, in His turn, uniting us to His Father in and by Himself.

From the first page of the Gospel, this title Son of God, is given to Jesus Christ as personally and exclusively belonging to Him: "The commencement of the Gospel of Jesus Christ, Son of God" (Mk. i. 1); the Evangelist expresses in these words his own faith and the faith of the Christians for whom he writes. In the Gospel narrative itself, the title Son of God is given to Jesus by the angel on the day of the Annunciation to Mary: "The Holy Spirit shall come upon thee, and the power of the Most High shall cover thee with His shadow; this is why the holy fruit which shall be born of thee shall be called 'Son of God'" (Luke i. 35). Twelve years later the child Jesus came into the Temple with His parents; He remained there three days after their departure and when His mother, at last finding Him, asks Him: "My child, why hast Thou dealt thus with us? Thy father and I have sought Thee sorrowing." He replies: "Why did you seek Me? Did you not know that I must be about My Father's concerns?" (Luke ii. 48, 49). This discreet manifestation raises for a moment the veil that masks the infancy of Christ; then He follows His parents to Nazareth, and, once more there is silence, obedience, mystery.

At the commencement of the public life, the Trinity, as we have already noticed, is mani-

fested in the scene of the Baptism; the solemn attestation of the Father, "This is My well-beloved Son," consecrates the mission of Christ, and, at the same time, reveals His personal dignity. In the desert, the temptations of the Devil begin with a like suggestion of Divinity. "If Thou be the Son of God," said Satan, "command these stones to change into loaves"; "If Thou be the Son of God, cast Thyself down from here." Many commentators have seen in these suggestions, not only temptations to presumption, but also efforts made by the Devil to provoke more express declarations on this decisive point of the divine filiation. Is it the same design that prompts the exclamations of the possessed? Or should we only recognise in them the cry of terror of a power that feels itself dominated, of the "strong man armed" who meets an adversary yet stronger than himself, who is about to turn him out of his house and from among his people? However this may be, it is certain that Jesus never wished to receive this testimony, but imposed silence upon the possessed; we also can only pass it by; there is other evidence more worthy of our notice.

The faith of the Apostles as expressed by St. Peter at Cæsarea Philippi is one of the lights which guide us through the Gospel with the greatest certainty. Jesus Himself guaranteed its importance and its derivation; further, it was prepared for by many

previous manifestations. After the scenes by the Jordan and the first meeting with Christ, comes the call on the shores of the lake, and, for Peter, the miraculous draught of fishes: he throws himself down at the feet of Christ, saying, "Withdraw Thyself from me Lord, for I am a sinner." Later, after the miracle of the loaves, the Apostles enter their ship and re-cross the lake: the wind rises; suddenly Jesus appears walking upon the waters. Peter, the most impetuous of the apostles, cries out, "Lord, if it be Thou, tell me to come to Thee upon the water." Jesus says to him, "Come." Peter starts, but seized with fear, begins to sink. Jesus rescues him and goes up with him into the ship, and as soon as ever they take their seats, the tempest ceases. The apostles, witnesses of all these wonders, fall down before Him saying: "Thou art truly the Son of God" (Matt. xiv. 33). To this narrative St. John adds another testimony offered by Peter to Christ. After the multiplication of the loaves and the return to Capernaum, Jesus presents Himself to the Jews as the Bread of Life which came down from Heaven; many of His disciples could not rise to the heights of this teaching and went away discouraged. Jesus turning towards those who remain, then says to them sadly: "Do you also wish to go away?" And Peter, speaking for them all, replies: "Lord, to whom should we go? Thou hast the words of

eternal life; we believe, and are sure that Thou art the Holy One of God" (John vi. 67—69).*

Not long afterwards, the yet more solemn confession that Peter made at Cæsarea Philippi, in the name of all the Apostles, marks a further progress in their faith, and Jesus, by His reply, guarantees its divine origin. "Whom do men say that the Son of Man is?" The disciples reply: "Some say that He is John the Baptist: others, Elias; other, Jeremias, or one of the prophets." And Jesus says to them: "But whom say you that I am?" Simon Peter answered and said: "Thou are the Christ, Son of the living God." And Jesus answered: "Blessed art thou Simon, son of John, because it is not flesh and blood that has revealed it to thee, but My Father Who is in heaven" (Matt. xvi. 13—17).

The special subject of this confession is the Messianic dignity of Jesus. The two other Evangelists report it less explicitly: in St. Mark we only read "Thou art the Christ"; in St. Luke "Thou art the Christ of God"; and shortly after we read in St. Matthew (xvi. 20) that Jesus forbade His

* Westcott notes here: "With this confession of St. Peter, that which is recorded in Matt. xvi. 16, which belongs to the same period but to different circumstances, must be compared. Here the confession points to the inward character in which the Apostles found the assurance of life; there the confession was of the public office and theocratic Person of the Lord."

disciples to say that He was the Christ. It is, moreover, clear that the three Evangelists agree in presenting this confession as being particularly decisive, and Jesus does not hesitate to attribute it to a revelation from the heavenly Father: there is, therefore, here, something more than the acclamations of the crowd hailing the Son of David: Christ feels Himself to be understood; this means that the Messianism recognised and confessed by St. Peter was the true Messianism, the religious and divine Messianism; and if from the beginning Christ is seen to be recognised by His followers, not only as the Messianic King but as the Son of God, this belief, quite new to Judaism, is much more easily made intelligible if it rests upon a profession of faith made by the Apostles and explicitly approved by Jesus.*

Of course, Peter's faith is not, as yet, fully enlightened: immediately after having paid this solemn testimony to the Christ the Son of the living God, he is shocked at the idea of the Passion and tries to turn Jesus away from it. He will not understand this mystery until after Pentecost: but, if he does not yet comprehend the humiliations of the Saviour, he at least begins to see His superhuman grandeur and His divine filiation.

Yet more valuable than the testimony of the Apostles is the witness of Jesus Himself,

* Cf. W. Sanday, art. *Son of God*, D.B. iv. 572.

certainly a cautious and slowly progressive, but a very illuminating witness, which alone enables us to penetrate intimately into the life of the Son of God and into His union with the Father.

To prepare them for this revelation, Jesus moulds His disciples on His own pattern; only the children of God can know the Son of God. If we read again in the Sermon on the Mount—more especially Matt. vi.—the programme of religious life that Christ lays before His disciples, we see that His whole effort is to initiate them into His uninterrupted intimacy with their Father in Heaven. Whatever the Christian does—almsgiving, fasting or praying—he must dismiss all thought of pleasing men and be entirely preoccupied with His "Father who sees in secret"; the life of the Christian—as St. Paul will say later—"is hidden in God with Jesus Christ." Christ does Himself, in fact, appear before us in the Gospel as the ideal model of that life of which He here outlines the scheme. His secret strength comes from union with the Father: "I am not alone for My Father is with Me"; "I always do that which pleaseth Him"; "My food is to do the will of Him that sent Me, and to accomplish His work." The inner life of Christ is especially apparent in the Gospel of St. John and it is always in the circle of His most intimate friends that He reveals it; but from His first preaching it is towards this ideal

that He allures all His disciples; this is the end they should keep before them, to become the sons of their heavenly Father, to be perfect even as their heavenly Father in heaven is perfect. This consciousness of the divine Fatherhood ought to become so vivid to them that they would not be able to give the name of Father to anyone on earth; henceforth they have only one Father, the Father in Heaven (Matt. xxiii. 9). All this finds expression in the prayer that He teaches them, which will become their distinctive prayer; "Our Father."

Yet, while by His teaching and His example, leading on His disciples towards this ideal that He sets before them, Jesus always makes a distinction between His filiation and theirs. God is the Father of Christ; God is the Father of Christians; but the two paternities are different and Jesus never confuses them. He teaches His disciples to say "Our Father," but He does not speak here; He always says "Your Father," or "My Father."* This manner of speech is

* Cf. Dalman, *The Words of Jesus*, p. 190: "He thus indicates the unique personal relation which subsists between God and in the first place Jesus Himself, but also between God and those who are His, who can be spoken of as the 'Sons of the theocracy' (Matt. xiii. 38). At the same time, Jesus draws a sharp line of distinction between Himself and the disciples in purposely setting aside the usual Jewish 'Our Father in heaven,' where He Himself is concerned, and yet prescribing its use for His disciples (Matt. vi. 9). From this, too, it may be perceived that it was not the veneration of those who came after that first assigned to Him an exceptional relation to God, in-

particularly significant in the texts where Jesus addresses Himself to His disciples: "It is thus that My Heavenly Father shall do unto you, if you do not forgive from the bottom of the heart" (Matt. xviii. 35). "Behold, I make the promise of My Father descend upon you" (Luke xxiv. 49). "I appoint unto you the Kingdom, as My Father hath appointed it unto Me" (Luke xxii. 29).

In the last of the texts quoted above, there is noticeable a parallelism which well expresses the unique position of the Son of God; between the heavenly Father and Christians—His children—He is the Mediator. Sent by His Father, He, in His turn, sends His disciples, and He loves to connect these two missions in order to make His position better understood, and, above all, in Himself, to unite Christians to the Father: "He that receives you, receives Me, and he that receives Me receives Him that sent Me" (Matt. x. 40). "He that despises you despises Me, and he that despises Me despises Him that sent Me" (Luke x. 16). In St. John the mind of Christ is unfolded along parallel lines, but so as to reach yet deeper truths; not only the mission of the Son and that of the Apostles but their innermost life, their love, their union: "As the living Father hath sent Me, and I live by

capable of being transferred to others." These reflections have already been made with great force by St. Augustine in Joann tract, 21, 3 (PL. 35, 1565—1566).

the Father, so he that eateth Me, even he shall live by Me" (John vi. 57). "I know My sheep and My sheep know Me, just as My Father knows Me, and I know My Father" (John x. 14—15). "Just as the Father has loved Me, I have loved you . . . If you keep My commandments, you shall abide in My love, even as I have kept My Father's commandments and abide in His love" (John xv. 9—10). "That all may be one, as Thou, Father art in Me and I in Thee, that they may be one in Us" (John xvii. 21). "As My Father hath sent Me, so I send you" (John xx. 21).

All these texts reveal in Jesus Christ a superhuman greatness. He is Mediator between God and man. This position cannot be interpreted in the sense given to it by the Arians: they only recognised in the Son of God an inferior god, midway between heaven and earth. The Catholic Church, on the contrary, believes that Christ is the Mediator, not because He is at an equal distance between the two terms God and man, but because He unites them in His Person, being "Very God and Very man." Many of the texts in which the humanity of Jesus and His loving dependence upon the Father are most clearly exhibited have already been brought together; many others might be added to them; thus "That the world may know that I love My Father, and that as My Father has ordered Me so I do"

(John xiv. 31). "Father . . . glorify Thy Son, that Thy Son may glorify Thee, as Thou hast given Him power over all flesh, in order that He should give eternal life to all those that Thou hast given Him" (John xvii. 1—2).

Once more it is the humanity of Christ that is heard in those words of longing and of humility that Jesus, on the point of going to His Father, addressed to His disciples: "If you loved Me you would rejoice because I go to My Father, for My Father is greater than I" (John xiv. 28).

But in the course of the same Gospel, and often of the same discourse, there are found, mingled with these humble words, the very highest asseverations. "My Father worketh hitherto," replies Jesus to the Pharisees who accused Him of violating the Sabbath, "and I work" (John v. 17); and the Evangelist gives precision to the meaning of this declaration by adding: "This is why the Jews sought the more to kill Him, because He had not only broken the Sabbath, but had even said that God was His own Father, making Himself equal to God"; and, in fact, Jesus goes on to say: "Verily, Verily, I say it unto you, the Son can do nothing of Himself, unless He sees the Father do it, for that which He does the Son does similarly . . . . Just as the Father raises up the dead and vivifies them, so the Son vivifies whom He will . . . As the Father has life in Him-

self, so has He given to the Son to have life in Himself" (John v. 19, 21, 26). And later, towards the end of His life, once more speaking to the Pharisees, "I give My sheep eternal life, and they shall never perish, and no one shall snatch them from My hands: what My Father has given Me is greater than all, and no one can snatch them from My Father's hand. I and My Father are one," ἕν ἐσμεν—(John xi. 28—30).

Thus the power of the Son is equal with that of the Father, or rather, is identical with it: both have only one identical power, one identical action, because they are only one identical nature. But if the Son possesses absolutely all that the Father possesses, it is from Him that it is received, it is the Father who gives it Him: these two aspects of the divine mystery are inseparable, and Christ reveals them both at the same time. The Son, like the Father, has life in Himself, but that is because the Father has given it to Him; all that the Father can do, the Son does likewise, but He can do nothing of Himself. Thus is manifested the divine unity; Christians who have received and understood these lessons from their Master will never be tempted to degrade the Son by making an inferior deity of Him, nor to separate Him from the Father to make an independent God of Him.

Is not all this summed up in the formula

of St. Hilary, already quoted above: "*Unum sunt, qui invicem sunt?*"

All these texts are taken from the Gospel of St. John. The persistence with which the Evangelist revives these high revelations is explained by the character and the aim of his work: "This has been written that you might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that, believing this, you might have life in His name" (John xx. 31). The Synoptic Gospels, born of the primitive instruction, leave the theological teaching of Our Lord more in the background and bring forward His moral teaching and His compassionate actions. In them He appears, not as He reveals Himself to His intimate friends, nor as He held Himself before the Pharisees of Jerusalem, whose pride deserved no consideration, but as He manifested Himself to the mass of His disciples, whom He slowly and patiently prepared for the Kingdom of God.

Yet in this teaching so forbearing and so humble, certain texts do suddenly appear, illuminating, as by a lightning flash, this same Son of God who is manifested in the Gospel of St. John.

There is, for example, the famous text in which Jesus, speaking of the Judgment day, says: "That day, no one knows it, neither the angels, neither the Son, but the Father only" (Mark xiii. 32).

The authenticity of this passage is

guaranteed by its own import: this ignorance of the Day of Judgment—if only apparent—no later editor would have dared to attribute to the Son;* its bearing is clear and important: in the gradation that He sets up, Jesus finds Himself raised above mankind and also above the angels; He is the Son in the proper and unique sense just as God is the Father.†

Still more explicit is the text in which Jesus, thrilling under the influence of the Holy Spirit, cries: "I thank Thee, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because Thou hast hid these things from the wise and understanding, and hast revealed them to children. "Even so, Father, I praise Thee because such has been Thy will. All things are entrusted to Me by My Father; and no one knows the Son but the Father; neither does any one know the Father, but the Son and he to whom the Son wills to reveal Him" (Matt.

* P. Lagrange, in his *Commentaire sur S. Marc* (p. 327), thus interprets this text: "The Son knows, but He has not been commissioned to communicate it, and, in this sense, He is ignorant of it . . . in as far as the Son is distinguished from the Father as sent by Him to men, this secret is not in His province." (We have expounded and defended this interpretation at some length in the *Recherches de science religieuse*, Oct. 1918, p. 421—429. We beg to refer the reader to this article.)

† Cf. James Stalker, Art. *Son of God*, DCG. 2, 656: "It is one of the clearest indications of a consciousness superior to mere humanity, for it places the speaker above men and angels so obviously, that even Holtzmann, in an unwonted outburst of concession, exclaims, 'This is the single passage in which the Son, while opposed along with the angels to the Father, appears to become a metaphysical magnitude' (*N.T. Theol.* 1. 268)."

xi. 25, 27; Luke x. 21, 22). Abandoning Himself to this religious emotion, to His pleasure in the designs of the Father, Christ reveals what is most intimate, most profound in the mystery of His life.

Here, as in the preceding passage, the two terms "Father" and " Son," have the absolute exclusive value that they will hold henceforth in the whole Christian tradition; and these two Persons appear in a mystery inaccessible to any other intelligence, a mystery into which they can, by grace, initiate whom they will, but in which They dwell by natural right, perfectly understanding each other. No room is left here for any subordinationist interpretation: the Father and the Son equally transcend all created intelligence, and equally understand each other.*

During the latter days of the life of Christ, these asseverations become more urgent and more solemn. From the commencement of His Galilean ministry, He, more than once, partially disclosed Himself in His conflicts with the Pharisees: these learned but dishonest foes were less excusable than the masses and had less claim to consideration; moreover, their polemics which harassed Christ unceasingly, provoked Him to fuller explanations. It was in reply to these attacks that Jesus claimed the right to forgive sins (Mark ii. 5—12) and that He affirmed "there

* Cf. Sanday, *Fourth Gospel*, p. 109; Plummer, *Saint Luke* p. 282.

is here more than the Temple" (Matt. xii. 6), "more than Jonas," "more than Solomon" (Matt. xii. 41—42), thus opening out an indefinite perspective far beyond the most glorious recollections and the most holy things.

Meantime, these conflicts became more violent and the catastrophe approaches; during the last week that He passes at Jerusalem, Christ makes Himself understood more clearly. It is then that He puts to His adversaries this question, which not one of them was able to solve: "What does Christ seem to you? Of whom is He the Son?" They say unto Him, "Of David," He says to them, "How then does David, under the action of the Spirit, call Him Lord, saying, 'The Lord said to my Lord, sit thou at my right until I have put thy enemies under thy feet?' If, then, David call Him 'Lord,' how is He his son? And no man was able to answer Him" (Matt. xxii. 42—46). Jesus does not repudiate the Davidic filiation, but He points out that that does not explain all the greatness of the Messiah, and that if He be the Son of David, He is also his Lord.

Still more explicit is the Parable of the Husbandmen, propounded by Christ during this last week. This parable is one of the best attested in the whole Gospel: except the parables of The Sower and the Grain of Mustard Seed, it is the only one found re-

corded in all three Synoptic Gospels; its subject matter itself confirms its authenticity: if it had been invented, or even altered, by the Christian Community, it would have told, not only of the mission and death of the Son of God, but also of His glorious resurrection.* It is Christ's supreme warning to His people on the eve of His death. The other parables are independent of the circumstances in which they were related; they contain moral or religious lessons which have the same value for all time; this one is addressed to the Jewish nation and its leaders alone; it makes clear to them the supreme effort made by God to save them, and the terrible responsibility which they were taking upon themselves:

> "A man planted a vine; he surrounded it by an enclosure and digged a wine-press, and built a tower, entrusted it to vine-dressers, and set out for foreign parts, and when he thought fit he sent a servant in order that he might receive from the vine-dressers part of the produce of the vine.
>
> And having seized him they beat him and sent him back with empty hands.
>
> And immediately afterwards he sent to them another servant, and him they struck on the head and outraged. And he sent another, and him they killed. And they maltreated many others, beating some, killing others. There remained to him yet another, a well-beloved son; he sent

* Cf. F. C. Burkett, *The Parable of the Wicked Husbandmen* in *Transactions of the Third International Congress of the History of Religions* (Oxford, 1908, II., p. 321, 399).

him to them last of all, saying, 'They will respect my son.' And those vine-dressers said among themselves, 'This is the heir, come, let us kill him, and we shall have the inheritance.'

And having seized him, they killed him and threw him out of the vineyard. What will the master of the vineyard do? He will come, and he will destroy the vine-dressers, and he will give the vine to others. Have you never read this Scripture?

'The stone which was rejected by those who built, is become the head of the corner.

This is the Lord's work, and it is wonderful in our eyes.'" Mark xii. 1—10.*

The Evangelist adds that the Pharisees wished to seize Jesus, but feared the crowd; for they understood that He had spoken the parable for them. This simple and pathetic narrative is, in fact, transparent in its signification, and no reader can make any mistake about it. The Vineyard of Yahve was Israel. The prophets—especially Isaiah—had sung of it, and their words were in everyone's memory. Yahve had surrounded it with a hedge, had cleared it of stones, had planted splendid vine-stocks in it, had built a tower, a wine vat. He expected grapes and found only thorns (Is. v. 2).

Jesus takes up this allegory, but modifies it and gives it a more definite meaning: not once does He accuse the sterility of the vine, but the unfaithfulness of the vine-dressers. He shows them to be the rebellious leaders of the chosen people, repulsing, illtreating,

* *Marc.* xii. 1—10, trans. Lagrange.

killing, one after another, all the prophets, and then comes the last feature of the allegory, so pathetic and so revealing: "There remained to him yet another, a well-beloved son. He sent him to them." Everything is contained in that: the compassion of God Who has loved us, even to giving His Only Son for us; the love of the Son, Who for our sakes accepts this fatal mission; the crime of the Jews, and above all, the distance which separates Jesus from the prophets. On many occasions in His previous preaching, Christ had called attention to this transcendency, affirming that there was in Him something more than in the greatest of men, more than in the most stainless glories of Israel; to-day He again insists on this infinite distance; they were servants, He is the Beloved Son.

Some days later Jesus was arrested and dragged before the Sanhedrin. He sees false witnesses produced, suborned by the enemy; He takes no notice of their incoherent testimony; He is silent.

The High Priest adjures Him in the name of God: "Art Thou the Christ, the Son of the Blessed?" "I am He," replies Jesus, "And you shall see the Son of Man seated on the right hand of Power, and coming in the clouds of heaven." Formerly He sealed the mouths of the possessed, He imposed silence on those miraculously healed, He commanded His disciples to keep secret the most glorious manifestations—the confession

of St. Peter, the Transfiguration: formerly, also, He hid Himself, He escaped from His enemies. Now that the hour has come for the decisive conflict Christ surrenders and reveals Himself. The Divine Providence which ordered everything in this sombre drama for our salvation and for the glorifying of the Son of God, willed that this supreme declaration should be made by Him before the great Council of the nation, upon oath, and at the cost of His life. The other accusations fall away of themselves, this witness alone held good, and it was for having given it that Jesus was put to death. The dignity thus offered Him and which He claims, is that of the Messiah; but, according to the unanimous witness of the three Synoptics, to this title "Christ" is added the title "Son of God"; this was never—this has already been pointed out—a qualification consecrated by Jewish usage: the members of the Sanhedrin took it up because Jesus made use of it, and it was in this claim especially, that they recognised blasphemy worthy of death.*

* Cf. Lagrange, *Évangile selon S. Marc.*, p. 378: "The scene described by Mark is of sovereign importance in appreciating the rôle of Jesus. They affirmed that He deserved death, not because of what He said about the destruction of the Temple, but for having blasphemed in calling Himself Messiah and Son of God. As the simple claim to the title of Messiah, though it might be made by a man deluded or deceived, had nothing blasphemous about it, probability leads us to agree with the Evangelists that Jesus not only declared Himself Messiah, but more —the Son of God in the full meaning of that phrase."

This attestation, sealed with the blood of the Son of God, is the guarantee of our faith; thousands of martyrs have had the glory of adding their humble testimony to this sovereign witness, and all Christians have pledged their lives to it: the Father Himself consecrated it by the glorious resurrection of Christ, when " His Son, who was born of the race of David according to the flesh," was " declared Son of God with power, according to the Spirit of holiness " (Rom. i. 3, 4).

This glorious consecration of the risen Son of God fills the last pages of the Gospel; it is there also, among the last teachings of our Lord, that there may be found one of those declarations which best throw light upon the mystery of the Holy Trinity:

> The eleven disciples went into Galilee on to a mountain that Jesus had indicated to them, and, seeing Him, they worshipped Him, but some of them doubted. Jesus, drawing nearer, said to them: " All power is given unto Me in heaven and in earth. Go, therefore, teach all nations, baptising them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit; teaching them to observe all that I have prescribed to you; and, behold, I am with you always even unto the consummation of the world " (Matt. xxviii. 16—20).*

* On the authenticity of this text cf. F. H. Chase. The Lord's Command to Baptise (Journal of Theological Studies, VI. (1905), p. 481—521), and our own *Les Origines du Dogme de la Trinité*, note E. Mt. 28, 19, p. 478—489.

In these words shines out all the majesty of the Son of God; He is invested with omnipotence and He promises perpetual succour to His own. It was in similar terms that Yahve in former days guaranteed His support to Moses and the prophets. At the same time Christ confirms the universal mission of His Apostles and orders them to baptise all nations in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Thus is fully manifested the God in three Persons: at the baptism of Jesus, He was already revealed to a few privileged persons; henceforth He appears in the full light; it is to Him that all Christians will be dedicated; it is in His name, by His authority, that every grace will be given.

But in order still better to grasp this supreme revelation, the progressive manifestations of the Holy Ghost, as traced in the Gospel, must now be considered.

## § 4.

The work of the Spirit is first manifested in the conception of Jesus: "The Holy Spirit shall come in thee," said the angel to Mary, "and the Power of the Most High cover thee with His shadow" (Luke i. 35). Then, round the Messiah, the divine action is extended: John the Baptist is filled with the Holy Ghost (i. 15), and Elizabeth (i. 41), and Zachariah (i. 67); it is the Spirit that

leads Simeon into the Temple (ii. 27) after having, by Its forewarnings and Its promises, prepared him for this grace (ii. 26).

This pouring out of the Holy Ghost had been predicted many times by the prophets as one of the privileges of the Messianic era;* in these early days of Christ's advent, it did, in fact, take place, but discreetly and veiled as was the appearance of the Messiah Himself.

On the day of the baptism of Jesus, while the Father is heard testifying that Jesus is His Beloved Son, the Holy Spirit appears under the form of a dove and rests on Christ. This first revelation of the Trinity, as has been said before, could not be fully comprehended except by Christians already enlightened by the Holy Ghost. On this first day of Our Lord's public ministry, those present only grasped its meaning very imperfectly and very unequally, according to their temperament; but later, by the light of God, they came to recognise in this scene, not only the consecration of Christ's mission, but also the promise of Christian baptism with its accompanying grace, and the anticipation of ulterior revelations; then, for the first time the Holy Ghost was manifested, not only as a grace and a force, but as the principle of all these

* The Messiah Himself must be clothed with the Spirit (Is. xi. 1—2; xlii. 1 sqq., lxi. 1); and the Spirit must spread all round Him (Is. xxxii. 15; xliv. 3 sqq.; Ezek. xi. 19; xxxvi. 26; xxxvii. 14; Joel ii. 28—29).

gifts, as the Divine Person from Whom they proceeded.*

So, as had been foretold by the prophets, henceforth the Spirit appears in intimate union with Christ. He it is Who urges Christ into the desert (Matt. iv. 1; Mark i. 12; Luke iv. 1); Who turns Him towards Galilee (Luke iv. 14); Who, in the most solemn circumstances, inspires His words (Luke x. 21); Who is the principle of His miracles, especially the deliverance of the possessed (Matt. xii. 28); further, the calumny of the Pharisees, attributing the works of Jesus to the Evil One, is a blasphemy against the Holy Ghost, and an unpardonable blasphemy (Matt. xii. 31—32; Mark iii. 28—30).

Christians, like Christ, must be guided and animated by the Holy Ghost; but it is through the death of Christ alone that they will obtain this grace. Through the whole of His ministry, Jesus promises it, as yet He does not bestow it. In reporting Christ's words at the Feast of Tabernacles, St. John emphasises this expressly: " If any man

* In the texts from St. Luke, referred to above, relating to the conception of Christ; to John the Baptist; to Elizabeth; to Zachariah; the question is of *a* Holy Spirit, that is to say, following the usual practice of St. Luke, a divine action, a divine power. On the other hand, at the baptism of Jesus, it is "the Spirit of God" (St. Matt.) that appears; "the Spirit" (Mark), "the Holy Spirit" (Luke). The determinate form of the expression, and yet more, the distinct manifestation of the Spirit under the form of a dove and its bringing together the Father and the Son, make the Evangelists' conception clear.

thirst, let him come unto Me and drink; he that believes on Me, as the Scripture says, rivers of living water shall flow out of his bowels," to which the Evangelist adds, "This He spake of the Spirit, which those that believe on Him should receive; for the Holy Spirit was not yet given, because Jesus was not yet glorified" (John vii. 37—39).

These promises are addressed specially to the Apostles: they will be pre-eminently inspired and guided by the Holy Ghost.

When Jesus foretells the persecutions they will have to undergo, He adds: "When they shall drag you before the tribunals, do not preoccupy yourselves with what you will have to say, but say that which will be given you in the hour itself, because it will not be you who will speak, but the Holy Spirit" (Mark xiii. 11), or, as St. Luke puts it, "the Holy Spirit shall teach you in the hour itself what it is necessary to say" (Luke xii. 12).

On the last day, after the Supper, Jesus repeats these promises and enlarges upon them: the Apostles will be thus inspired, not in the hour of persecution only, but throughout their whole life and ministry, and the Holy Ghost, the other Paraclete, will fill, in relation to them, the same rôle as Jesus Himself filled during His mortal life. These promises reveal, at the same time, the action of the Holy Spirit and His Person; they must be transcribed here, because, on the subject we are now studying, there is no

passage more explicit in the whole of the New Testament:—

"If you love me, you will keep My commandments, and I will pray the Father, and He shall give you another Paraclete, in order that He may be with you for ever; the Spirit of Truth; whom the world cannot receive, because it neither sees Him, nor knows Him, but you shall know Him, for He shall dwell with you and shall be in you. I will not leave you orphans, I will come to you. Yet a little while and the world will see Me no more; but you shall see Me because I live, and you shall live" (John xiv. 15—19). "I have said these things to you while I remain with you; but the Paraclete is the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in My Name, He shall teach you all things and shall recall to you all things that I have said to you" (xiv. 25—26).

"When the Paraclete shall have come, whom I will send to you on the part of the Father, the Spirit of Truth which proceeds from the Father, He shall bear witness to Me." (xv. 26).

"I tell you the truth; it is useful for you that I go away, for if I go not away, the Paraclete will not come to you; but if I go away, I will send Him to you. And when He shall have come, He will convince the world of sin and of justice and of judgment: of sin, because it believes not on Me; of justice, because I go to My Father and you shall see Me no more; of judgment, because the prince of this world is already judged. I have yet much to say to you, but you cannot bear it now.

"When, He, the Spirit of Truth, shall have come, He will make you enter into all truth; because He shall not speak from Himself but He will tell you what He has heard, and He will

announce to you things to come. He shall glorify Me, for He will take of Mine, and will announce it to you. All that the Father has is Mine; that is why I said to you that He will take of Mine and will announce it to you" (John xvi. 7—15).

The narrative of the baptism of Jesus, still more the promises of Christ to His Apostles, exhibit the personal character of the Holy Ghost; the discourse transcribed above makes it quite clear. Not only is He represented as a personal agent bearing witness to the Son, glorifying Him, teaching all truth, but above all He is promised to the Apostles, as He who will fill in them the same rôle as Christ: it is another Paraclete who will come to them, who will dwell in them when Our Lord will have left them; and this Presence will be so precious to them, that it is expedient for Jesus to go away, in order that the Paraclete may come to them.*

None of this could be unless the Holy Ghost is a Person, and a divine Person, with a status equal to that of the Son of God Himself.

This Person, obviously distinct from the

* This personal character is further emphasised by the expression employed by St. John: notwithstanding the proximity of the neuter noun τὸ πνεῦμα, he always employs the masculine pronoun ἐκεινος to designate the Holy Ghost (xiv. 26; xv. 26; xvi. 13—14), in the same way as in the Prologue (i. 12) he employs the masculine noun αὐτόν to designate the Word, in spite of the proximity of the neuter noun το φώς.

Father and from the Son, is intimately united to them, in fact to such a degree that His coming into the Apostles is the same thing as the coming of the Son: Jesus tells them that He is going away, in order that the other Paraclete may come in them, but He also says to them: " I will not leave you orphans, I will come to you " (John xiv. 18). Just as He says to them—a little lower down—" If a man love Me, he will keep My word, and My Father will love him, and We will come to him and make Our abode with him " (John xiv. 23).

So the Spirit cannot come without the Son, nor the Son without the Father; there is an indissoluble unity of the Divine Persons, the pattern and bond of the union of Christians.

In studying the unity of the Father and the Son, we ascertained that nothing distinguishes them unless it be the reciprocal relations which differentiate them and which unite them: *Unum sunt, qui invicem sunt,* we again repeat after St. Hilary.

The Holy Ghost has not been revealed to us as fully as the Father and the Son; yet all that Christ has given us to know of Him constrains us to the same general view. The discourses of Jesus describe for us, in a general way, the relations between the Spirit and the Son under the same traits as the relations between the Son and the Father. The Son was sent by the Father (John iii. 17), so the Spirit will be sent by the Son

(xv. 26; xvi. 17); the Son is the witness of the Father (i. 18; iii. 11; vi. 8—38); the Spirit will be the witness of the Son (xv. 26); He will glorify the Son (xvi. 14) as the Son glorifies the Father (xvii. 4); the Son says nothing of Himself, but only what the Father commands Him to say (xii. 49; vii. 16); so the Spirit will say nothing from Himself, but will say all that He has heard . . . "He will take of Mine" Jesus adds, "and will announce it to you" (xvi. 13—14).

This parallelism suggested by Our Lord Himself, guided the Fathers; it was on these lines that St. Athanasius embarked, when replying to the first attacks on heresy, he expounded in his letters to Serapion, the theology of the Holy Ghost.

These analogies, however, do not exclude essential differences.

Filiation characterises the relations of the Son and the Father; it never appears in the theology of the Holy Spirit: the Father is the unique principle of the Son, it is not so with the Son envisaging the Spirit: the Son sends the Spirit, but "on the part of the Father" (Jn. xv. 26). He says "the Spirit will take of Mine," but He explains it thus: "All that the Father has is Mine, and that is why I said that He will take of Mine" (xvi. 14—15). Therefore, even in His relations with the Holy Ghost, the Son is dependent on the Father: it is from Him that He receives

all that He gives to the Spirit. Here, as always, the Father is the first principle and sovereignly independent.

From Him proceeds the Spirit (xv. 26).* It is He Who sends the Spirit in response to the prayer of the Son (xiv. 16) Who sends Him in the name of the Son (xiv. 26).

The whole of this doctrine is well summed up in the symbolic vision of the Apocalypse: "A river of living water, sparkling like crystal, proceeding from the throne of God and of the Lamb" (Rev. xxii. 1). Such, for St. John, is the nature and origin of the Holy Ghost: He proceeds from an unique source —the throne of God and of the Lamb. But the prophet of the Apocalypse does not forget the teaching that he received from the Son of God. This throne does not belong to the Father and the Son under an identical title. One possesses divinity as being the unique principle of it, the other as receiving it from Him in plenitude.†

The revelations of Christ at the Last Supper complete His previous teaching on the Father and on Himself. Henceforth God

* This text seems to set forth directly rather the temporal mission of the Holy Ghost than His eternal procession: this is indicated in the expression παρὰ τοῦ πατρὸς (not ἐκ τοῦ πατρὸς) cf. Westcott's note. But these two mysteries are closely bound up with each other. If the Holy Ghost be sent by the Father, it is because He proceeds from Him.

† The procession of the Holy Ghost can, therefore, be correctly expressed either by saying that He proceeds from the Father and the Son, or by saying that He proceeds from the Father by the Son. Cf. supra. p. 101.

is known to Christians, never as the god of philosophers, but as the Living God. The Patriarchs had believed in Him without seeing Him; the prophets had transmitted His oracles without revealing Himself. The Only Son, Who is in the bosom of the Father, alone could tell us about Him. He has done this; He has introduced all His disciples, all His brethren, into the intimacy of this divine life; because that life was inaccessible, men believed it to be solitary; but now they can perceive within it outpourings of love, three Persons giving themselves up to each other absolutely, completely satisfied in each other, and embracing each the other in the unity of a single nature; thus this life that appeared to men so far off has taken possession of their very selves to transform and unify them. "That they may be one, as We are One, I in them and Thou in Me, in order that they may be perfected in unity." This is the supreme prayer of Christ to His Father (John xvii. 22—23); henceforth it is to this end that the whole work of the Holy Ghost in the Church will tend.

## CHAPTER III.

### THE REVELATION OF THE TRINITY IN THE APOSTOLIC CHURCH.

### § 1.

THE narrow limits of this sketch do not admit of our describing here all the developments of the revelation of the mystery of the Trinity that took place in the Apostolic age, especially under St. Paul and St. John.* It must suffice to point out the influence of the revelations made by Christ on the faith and the religious life of the early Christians: the words of Our Lord sank into the soul of the disciples and germinated there; let us examine the harvest: this will enable us yet better to understand the seed from which it has been produced.

" Lo I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world." This promise of the Risen Christ is being fulfilled from the first days of the Church. Jesus continues to live among His own; He sustains their courage and directs their efforts. It is He who at Damascus sends Ananias to baptise Saul (Acts ix. 10, sqq.); Who, at Joppa, triumphs over Peter's hesitation and prepares

* The reader desirous of pursuing this study, will find material in our *Origines du Dogme de la Trinité* (p. 260—531).

him to be the Apostle of the Gentiles (x. 9, sqq.; xi. 5, sqq.); Who, at Jerusalem, decides Saul to leave Judæa and to go and evangelise the nations (xxii. 18, sqq.) When St. Stephen appeared before the Jews "He looked up steadfastly into heaven and saw . . . Jesus." "Behold," he cries, "I see the heavens open and the Son of Man standing on the right hand of God." They cast him out of the city; they stone him; at the point of death he prays: "Lord Jesus, receive my spirit," then, kneeling down, he cries with a loud voice, "Lord, do not impute to them this sin," and in uttering these words he died.* The first Christian martyr appeals to Christ in the same terms as those in which the dying Jesus prayed to His Father. How many martyrs since have echoed the same prayer! If the soul thus reached out towards Our Lord, at the supreme hour of martyrdom, it is because invocation of Our Lord had become for it a profound religious custom. It is met with again in the short formula "Come, Lord," by which the Early

* Acts vii. 55—60. This vision and this prayer of St. Stephen are all the more remarkable because the martyr's speech before the Sanhedrin stopped far short of this: there he contented himself with presenting Jesus as the Righteous One, Whose coming the prophets had predicted.

The remoteness of apologetic preaching from the personal faith of Christians is easily understood, just as the character of Christ's teaching was more or less explicit according to whether He was addressing the crowd or His Apostles; but St. Luke's faithfulness in reporting these early elementary discourses, is a fresh guarantee of the accuracy of his narratives.

Christians implored the coming of Christ. This prayer is so familiar to them that it is met with in St. Paul, in the Apocalypse, and in the Didache, both in Greek and in Aramaic.*

As early as this, too, as well as prayers to Christ, Christians recited hymns in His honour: fragments of these may be recognised here and there, for instance, these versicles from the first Epistle to Timothy, "He was manifested in the flesh, He was sanctified in the Spirit, He was seen by angels, He was preached unto the nations, He was believed in the world, He was received into glory."† Again, it is the echo of a Christian hymn that is heard in the Epistle to the Ephesians (v. 14): "Awake, thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead, and Christ shall give thee light." There may also be recognised, with considerable probability, some fragments of liturgical hymns in the Canticles of the Apocalypse.‡

In any case, one must perceive in these songs of heaven the echoes of Christian prayers: the four beasts and the four-and-twenty elders sing to Christ:

> "Thou art worthy to take the book and to open the seals of it, for Thou hast been sacrificed, and Thou hast redeemed to God in Thy blood men out of every kindred, and tongue, and people,

* 1 Cor. xvi. 22; Apoc. xxii. 20; Did. x. 6.

† 1 Tim. iii. 16.

‡ Cf. Swete, *Apocalypse*, p. 80.

and nation; and Thou hast made of them, for our God, a Kingdom of priests: and they shall reign on the earth."

And the angels take up the refrain:

"He is worthy, the sacrificed Lamb, to receive power, and riches, and strength, and honour, and glory, and blessing."

"And all creatures which are in heaven and on the earth, and under the earth and such as are in the sea, and all that is therein, I heard them say: To Him that is seated upon the throne, and to the Lamb, be praise, and honour, and glory, and power, for ever and ever. And the four beasts said: Amen, and the elders fell down and worshipped" (Rev. v. 9—14).

In this hymn, the doxology, which attributes blessing and honour and glory and power "to Him that sitteth upon the throne and to the Lamb" should be especially noticed. These exclamations were one of the traditional forms of Jewish worship: in this way the Jews loved to acknowledge publicly the attributes of God and to rejoice in them: it was a formula of adoration never applied to any other being but God; neither Moses, nor the angels, nor the Messiah could be the object of this worship. In the New Testament the doxology is usually ascribed to God the Father; but sometimes Christ is also the object of it, either as the Mediator in whom the Father is glorified,* or even as He Who is glorified,† or, again, as being

* Jude xxv.; Rom. xvi. 27.
† 2 Tim. iv. 18; 2 Pet. iii. 18; Apoc. i. 6. Perhaps Heb. xii. 21; 1 Pet. iv. 11.

united to His Father in the glory, and receiving with Him the same worship.*

This intimate union of God the Father with Jesus Christ appears again in the forms of salutation that are met with at the beginning or at the end of the Apostolic Epistles. St. Paul begins nearly all his letters with these words: "May grace and peace be granted you by God our Father, and by the Lord Jesus Christ."†

The other Apostles, without making use of this formula, generally begin their letters by mention of, or invocation of God and Christ: "James, servant of God and of the Lord Jesus Christ . . ." (Jas. i. 1). "May grace and peace abound in you, in the knowledge of God, and of Jesus Our Lord" (2 Pet. i. 2). "Our communion is with the Father, and with His Son Jesus Christ" (1 John i. 3). "We shall receive grace, mercy and peace from God the Father, and from Jesus Christ, the Son of the Father" (2 John 3). "Jude, servant of Jesus Christ, brother of James, to the elect, loved by God the Father, and preserved by Jesus Christ" (Jude 1). More rarely, the Spirit is joined with God the Father and with Jesus

* Apoc. v. 13; cf. vii. 10; cf. F. H. Chase, *The Lord's Prayer in the Early Church, Texts and Studies*, I. 3, p. 168, 176.

† Rom. i. 7; 1 Cor. i. 3; 2 Cor. i. 2; Gal. i. 3; Eph. i. 2; Phil. i. 2; Philem. i. 3; the same formula with slight variations: 2 Thess. i. 2; 1 Tim. i. 2; 2 Tim. i. 2; Tit. i. 4.

Christ: "Peter, an apostle of Jesus Christ, to the elect . . . according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, in the sanctification of the Spirit, unto obedience and the sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ" (1 Pet. i. 2). "May the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Spirit, be with you all" (2 Cor. xiii. 14).

To the Christians of to-day, all these forms of prayer, of worship, of salutation, seem quite simple and natural; and so they did in the documents in which they appear, of which some—the earliest letters of St. Paul—are not much later than five and twenty years after the death of Jesus. But it is from their impersonal character that they derive all their value and that they come before us as the collective witness of primitive Christianity. It is no theologian, however great, neither Peter, nor Paul, nor John, who invented this worship; this faith, this prayer, in one word, this religion, comes from a Master far above them yet infinitely closer. He alone Who created Judaism could thus transform it without destroying it; confirm the rigour of its monotheism, even while introducing as its object, by the side of God the Father, the Son of God and the Holy Ghost.

The union of the Son with the Father, in Christian worship, is further set forth by the attribution to Christ of divine names, par-

ticularly the name "Lord," which, from the first Christian generation, became His own special name. This title "the Lord" was frequently given by the heathen, especially Orientals, to their divinities: among the Jews it was one of the names of God, generally, among the Hellenist Jews, translating the name Adonai, just as "God" was used as the translation of Elohim. Christian usage soon attributed the name God to the Father and the name Lord to the Son. "For the heathen," writes St. Paul, "there are many gods and many lords, but for us there is only one God, the Father from Whom comes everything, and from Whom we are: and there is only one Lord Jesus Christ, by Whom all exists, and by Whom we are" (1 Cor. viii. 5—6). This custom has come down to us, and we still repeat: "I believe in One God, the Father Almighty . . . . and in One Lord Jesus Christ . . ."*

This attribution of divine names does not imply any dilution of their value: they are as sacred to Christians as they were to the Jews: heathen usage was lavish of them, but for Christians that is an abhorred profanation. Later, the Irenarch Herod will say to St. Polycarp: "What harm is there in saying Cæsar is Lord?" He did not understand the rigid exclusiveness of the Christian because

* On the other hand, this usage is not so exclusive as to prevent finding the name Lord applied to the Father (e.g. 1 Cor. iii. 5) and the name God applied to the Son (Acts xx. 28; Rom. ix. 5; Tit. ii. 13; 2 Pet. i. 1).

he did not suspect the exhaustive character of this profession of faith in which St. Paul summed up the whole of Christianity—"Jesus is Lord."

Other expressions, already hallowed by Jewish usage, are similarly applied to Christ, and further establish the significance of the divine name which is given Him. In the Old Testament and the Jewish Apocrypha, those who "invoke the name of the Lord" are the followers of Yahve, those who belong to Him, who fear Him, who worship Him. Christians preserve this expression, applying it sometimes to the Father,* but almost always to the Son of God.

When St. Paul came to Damascus, his mission was to "bind all that call on the name of Jesus" (Acts ix. 14, 21). At the beginning of his first letter to the Corinthians, the Apostle salutes "the Church of God which is at Corinth, those who are sanctified in Christ Jesus, the elect Saints, with all those who invoke the name of Our Lord Jesus Christ" (1 Cor. i. 2). Later on he recommends Timothy to preserve peace, with "all those who, from a pure heart, call on the Lord" (2 Tim. ii. 22). In the Epistle to the Romans (x. 13) he quotes the classic text from Joel: "Whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved"; in his speech at Jerusalem, St. Peter had applied this text to God the Father (Acts ii. 21),

* Acts ii. 21.

here St. Paul applies it to the Lord Jesus: in both cases the prophetic text preserves its full religious value, it expresses the same adoration, it contains the same assurance of salvation.

The same thing will be noticed *à propos* of other Old Testament texts, in which the divine name Lord is interpreted as relating to Christ. Thus St. Mark interprets Isaiah (xl. 3): "The voice of him who cries in the wilderness: make ready the way of the Lord." St. Peter (1 Pet. ii. 3) does the same with Psalm xxxiv. 9: "If you have tasted how gracious the Lord is," and elsewhere (1 Pet. iii. 14—15) with the text in Isaiah (viii. 12—13): "Do not fear those who persecute you, but honour the Lord, the Christ." St. Paul still more frequently, makes these applications. It is thus that he writes to the Corinthians (1 Cor. ii. 16): "Who has known the mind of the Lord, and can instruct Him? (Is. xl. 13). But we have the mind of Christ." Further on (1 Cor. x. 9), recalling the unfaithfulness of the Jews in the wilderness as recorded in Psalm xcv. 8—9, "Neither let us tempt the Lord," he cries, "as some of the Jews tempted Him." Again (1 Cor. x. 21), taking a text from Malachi (i. 7—12): "You cannot participate at the Lord's table, and at the table of demons." Once more in the Epistle to the Hebrews (i. 10—11) it is to Christ that verses 26—28 of Psalm cii. are applied

" Thou, Lord, in the beginning hast founded the earth, and the heavens are the work of Thy hands: they shall perish but Thou remainest . . ."*

In one of the most ancient of Christian documents (2 Thess. i. 7, sqq.) there is a description of the Parousia of Christ; all its characteristics are borrowed from the picture sketched by the old prophets of the coming of Yahve.† Similarly in St. John (xii. 41) the theophany of Isaiah (vi. 1) is interpreted as a vision of Christ: in the Apocalypse (i. 14) Christ is represented under characteristics used by Daniel (vii. 9) to describe the Ancient of Days.

These examples taken from the various authors of the New Testament, suffice to prove that there is no question of exegetic handling special to a certain writer: obviously it is the whole Church that, in Old Testament revelation, has recognised Christ, Her Lord. Of course, it must not be concluded from this that She substituted Jesus for Yahve, or that She identified the Son and the Father; but quite definitely that She recognised and worshipped in both a unique majesty: " Who sees Me, sees My Father."

Notice, again, the religious formulæ so frequent in all the books of the New Testa-

* Cf. Westcott, *Hebrews*, pp. 90—93, note on the application to Christ of words spoken of the Lord in the Old Testament.

† Cf. Lightfoot, *Notes on St. Paul's Epistles* from unpublished commentaries (London, 1904) p. 102.

ment: "The fear of the Lord," "the grace of the Lord," "faith in the Lord," "conversion to the Lord," "the service of the Lord," "the preaching" or "the word of the Lord," "the way of the Lord," "the will of the Lord." All these personal relations of the soul with the Lord are religion itself; the object of it is, indifferently, sometimes the Father, sometimes the Son; frequently it is impossible to discover the more probable interpretation, the sacred writer having left it optional. This means that Christian worship is not offered to two Gods, nor to two Lords; it turns with the same confidence and with the same love towards Jesus as towards His Father. Here, again, may be recognised, in Christian devotion, the faithful echo of the teaching of the Son of God as reported by St. John: "You believe in God, believe also in Me"; "The life eternal, it is to know Thee, the only true God, and He whom Thou hast sent, Jesus Christ."

## § 2.

The study of this faith in the Lord Jesus as it was unanimously professed by the Early Christians, is the best preparation for reading the letters of St. Paul. Whether long epistles or short notes, all these letters are penetrated with this ardent faith: from personal revelations the apostle illuminated and confirmed it: he most certainly did not invent

it for the Church, he shared it with all his brethren, and he was sure that his least allusions would be caught, that his sublimest visions would be understood. Exhorting the Corinthians to almsgiving, he suggests to them, almost casually, the example of the Son of God, humiliating and impoverishing Himself for us. "You know the grace of Our Lord Jesus Christ, how that, being rich, for your sakes He reduced Himself to poverty, that you by His poverty might be rich" (2 Cor. viii. 9). To inspire in the Philippians a humble and tender-hearted charity, he puts the same divine model before their eyes.

> "Have in yourselves the sentiments which were in Christ Jesus, Who, though He subsisted in the form of God, did not regard equality with God as a thing to be snatched at, but made Himself nothing in taking the form of a slave, and in becoming like men, and, recognised as man by those around Him, He abased Himself and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross. This is why God has exalted Him, and given Him the name which is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee might bow, in heaven, on earth, and under the earth, and that every tongue might confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father."*

When the faithful of Laodicea and Colosse

* Phil. ii. 5—11. Lightfoot may be consulted on this classic passage. *Philippians*, pp. 110—115 and 127—138. Also Gifford, *The Incarnation, a Study of Philippians*, II. 5—11. (The Expositor. Sept., Oct., 1896, and London, 1887.)

let themselves be disturbed by fanciful opinions spread round them in Asia Minor, and transfer to intermediary beings, to angels, the worship they no longer dare offer direct to God, St. Paul, to dissipate these dreams, recalls to them the faith in the Christ, who is never intermediary, but mediator.

> "God has delivered us from the power of darkness, and has transferred us into the Kingdom of the Son of His love, in whom we have redemption, the remission of sins, who is the image of the invisible God, first-born before every creature; for in Him all has been created in the heavens and on earth, things visible and invisible, thrones, dominations, principalities, powers; everything has been created by Him and for Him. And He exists before all, and all subsists in Him; and He Himself is the head of the body of the Church; He is the principle, the first-born from among the dead, in order to have the primacy in everything, because it pleased all the plenitude to dwell in Him, by Him to reconcile everything, bringing into peace by Him, by the blood of His cross, that which is upon earth and that which is in heaven" (Col. i. 13—20).

The Christology of St. Paul is not wholly contained in these three passages; to grasp its full richness, all his letters must be read as one whole; by this means at all events, one recognises the essential features which so many other texts that are familiar to him evoke in the mind of the reader. What strikes one all through is the constant and decisive influence that

the image of Christ exercises on the life of St. Paul: has he to encourage, or exhort, or reprove his followers, instinctively his thought is carried to this ever-present model: charity, abnegation, self-sacrifice—all the virtues are in Jesus Christ, the Christian has merely to reproduce them, to become, like Paul himself, the imitator of Christ. No less clearly does it appear that this Perfect Model is not exterior to man. It is at once the strength that sustains him and the life that animates him.

Dead and buried with Christ in baptism, the Christian comes up from the baptismal water, risen again with Christ; thenceforth he lives in Him and by His life. "It is no more I who live, but Christ who liveth in me"; this triumphant affirmation can, and should be, repeated by all the baptised; it is not merely the enthusiastic cry of a saint, it is the act of faith of every Christian. We notice in the teaching of Jesus, the empire that He claims over our souls, over everything that is most personal in our lives. St. Paul's teaching is a faithful echo of the divine claims of the Sermon on the Mount. For every Christian, Christ is the source of the whole life, consequently, He is also the Master of it. Not one of us lives to himself, not one of us dies to himself; if we live, we live unto the Lord, and if we die, we die unto the Lord, so whether we live or die, we are the Lord's.

These aspects of faith, ever present to the mind of St. Paul, illuminate all his Christology: for him the Lord is no stranger outside his life; even when he seeks to describe His eternal glory and His influence over the whole world, before everything else he sees in Him his Saviour; this is seen clearly, for example, in the passage from the Epistle to the Colossians quoted above: it is the redemption, the remission of sins that St. Paul sees from the first, and his last look is at the cross, and at the blood that has " made peace."

At the same time he sees that this vivifying action of Christ is not limited to one soul: the whole Church is animated by it: " He is the head of the body of the Church." Dead to ourselves, by baptism we are raised again in Christ, but not alone: " We have all been baptised in one sole body," and this unity, created by baptism, is consecrated by the Eucharist: " We are all only one sole bread and one sole body." Every member has its proper function, fixed by the Spirit of Christ as He wills: but all have one principle of virtue and of life—Christ and His Spirit: "It is by Him that all the body, nourished and organised by means of the joints and ligaments, increases with the increase of God " (Col. ii. 19).

And this action of Christ extends even beyond the Church and humanity: it spreads over the whole universe. Speaking to the heathen at Athens, St. Paul says to

them, of God: "It is in Him that we have life and movement and being" (Acts xvii. 28).

In the same way he affirms this divine attribute of Christ in the passage from Colossians that has just been considered: "All subsists in Him; in fact, everything comes from Him: and everything tends towards Him. All has been created by Him and for Him."

This wide outlook upon the world is by no means sterile speculation: this Lord, beginning and end of all things, is head of the Church, the life of each one of us; therefore these infinite perspectives that are opened out to the faith of the Christian do not overwhelm him, but give him anchorage. "All is yours, and you are Christ's; Christ is God's."

Thus is the believer brought back to the unique principle of all life, God the Father. Many of the words of Our Lord, reported in the Gospels, have already led us by a similar transition from the Christian towards Christ and from Christ to God.

St. Paul, again, generally develops his conception by similar stages: "The head of every man is Christ, man is the head of the woman, and God the head of Christ" (1 Cor. xi. 3); of course, this is only an analogy: the union of man and woman is incomparably less close than the union of man with Christ, which itself remains infinitely below the supreme unity that joins Christ to God. But at least what here stands

out is the intimate dependence that unites men to Christ their head, and Christ to God His Father.

To make this dependence better understood, St. Paul generally has recourse to expressions in the Books of Wisdom, especially the Wisdom of Solomon. "Christ the power of God and the Wisdom of God" (1 Cor. i. 24). "Christ who is the image of God" (2 Cor. iv. 4). "Who is the image of the invisible God" (Col. i. 15). Again, in the Epistle to the Hebrews (i. 3), Christ is represented as the radiation of His glory and the imprint of His substance.*

These expressions, supplementing and confirming each other, make it possible to comprehend something of the inseparable union of the Father and the Son, at the same time as they illuminate the rôle of the Son as the revealer of the Father.

All the same, they are less full of meaning than the name Son, which Jesus Himself claimed during His mortal life, and which is for St. Paul, as for every Christian, the

* These borrowings from the Book of Wisdom are similar to those made from the prophetic books and are born of the same faith: in both cases it is the belief in Christ, living in the hearts of Christians, which suggests to them the application of these names and these divine attributes to the Son of God; but at the same time, this belief is made clearer by the light of previous revelations. This influence is specially apparent here: Christ, the Wisdom of God, the Image of God, the Brightness of God—these are most fertile conceptions: St. Paul and St. John consecrate them; the Fathers, above all, the Greek Fathers, point out, yet more fully, their implications.

proper name for our Lord. It is in His eternity, long before the Incarnation, that the Son appears to us: "God has sent His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh" (Rom. viii. 3). "When the fulness of the time was come God sent His Son" (Gal. iv. 4). Hence it is not Christ's mission, nor His Messianic rôle that made Him the Son of God: this is what He was in eternity, and this is how the infinite love of God appears to us, the love that sent Him and gave Him up for us: "He has not spared His own Son, but has delivered Him up for us all, how then shall He not with Him give us everything?" (Rom. viii. 32). In these passages may be noticed St. Paul's insistency in calling Jesus Christ the only Son of God. All Christians, certainly, are sons of God, but they are so only because they have been baptised into Christ, and have put on Christ (Gal. iii. 26, 27), and because they have thus become His co-inheritors and brethren (Rom. viii. 17—29). Once again we find here a faithful echo of the teaching of Jesus in His Gospel. Divine filiation is the privilege that Our Lord conferred upon us, and of which He teaches us to become worthy; but this filiation presupposes His own, and leaves that peerless. It is because Jesus is the only Son of God from all eternity, that we, His brethren and co-heirs, can become sons of God.

The texts to which we have just referred, show us, by the side of the Father and of the

Son, the Holy Ghost inseparable from the One and from the Other. If Christ is united to the Christian, if He vivifies Him, it is by His Spirit; if He animates the whole Church, if He pours out diverse graces, upon it, it is still by His Spirit: "All these worketh the one and the self-same Spirit, distributing to each as He will. For even as the body is one and has many members, and all the members of the body, however numerous they be, form only one sole body, so is it with Christ, because it is by one Spirit that we are all baptised in one sole body" (1 Cor. xii. 8—13). So without the Spirit there is no union with Christ: "Whoever has not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of Christ's" (Rom. viii. 9). It is the Spirit who makes of us sons of God, who inspires in us convictions and prayers:

> "Those who are moved by the Spirit of God, they are the Sons of God, for you have not received a spirit of bondage again to fear; but you have received a spirit of adoption in which we cry: Abba, Father. The Spirit itself bears witness to our spirit, that we are the children of God . . . . we also who have the first-fruits of the Spirit, we groan within ourselves while waiting for the adoption, the redemption of our body . . . . the Spirit comes in help to our feebleness, because we know not for what we ought to pray, but the Spirit itself prays with ineffable groanings; and He Who searches the heart knows what is the thought of the Spirit, because it is according to God that He prays for the saints" (Rom. viii. 14—27).

The Spirit is still for us the revealer, who unveils for us the secrets of God:

> "The Spirit searches everything, even the depths of God. For who of men knows what is of man, if not the spirit of man which is in man? Even so, no one knows what is of God, if not the Spirit of God. But it is not the spirit of the world that we have received, it is the Spirit sent from God, in order that we might know the gifts which God has made unto us" (1 Cor. ii. 10—12).

It is obvious that this Spirit, inseparable from the Father and from the Son, and the principle in us of divine gifts, could not be an intermediary being and inferior to God, as was imagined by the heretics of the fourth century.

Further, it may be noticed that the rôle that the Apostle recognises as His, is a purely personal rôle, described under the same characterisation as the rôle of Christ Himself. He dwells in us (Rom. viii. 9—11; 1 Cor. iii. 16), just as Christ does (Rom. viii. 10); we are the Temple of the Spirit (1 Cor. vi. 19), just as we are the Temple of God (Ib. iii. 16); He is sent by God into our hearts (Gal. iv. 16) exactly as the Son was sent by God to be incarnate (Gal. iv. 4). It is certainly a Person, who, as we read just now, groans in us, intercedes for us, and through the whole Church produces and distributes gifts as He wills.

This personal character appears specially in those passages where the Holy Ghost is

placed on an equal footing with the Father and the Son. "There are distinctions of charisms, but one sole Spirit; there are distinctions of ministers, but one sole Lord; and there are distinctions of operations, but one sole God who works all in all" (1 Cor. xii. 4—6). "May the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with you all" (2 Cor. xiii. 13). Of course this form of salutation cannot be pressed as might be done with a dogmatic definition; but we may safely recognise in it a spontaneous manifestation of the faith of the Apostle and his correspondents.

It is the same faith which finds expression in the baptismal formula and is more amply set forth in the Gospel of St. John.

## § 3.

We have already read over and commented upon the discourses of Christ that are reported by St. John. The mysteries of the divine life are there placed before us with a clarity that will never be surpassed in this world, and it is there that we find the highest and most abundant source whence we derive our faith in the Trinity. It is impossible to separate these teachings of the Master from the thought of the disciple. The Son of God who is made known to us by St. John, willed to be only the witness of the

Father, not saying anything of Himself. The Evangelist, in his turn, desired to be no more than a witness, reporting what he had seen and heard, and effacing himself. Nevertheless, his whole soul vibrates in his narrative; the discourses, the miracles, the death and resurrection of the Son of God had been dwelt upon by the beloved disciple for so long that his whole religious life is taken up into his recollections, since by them that life itself had been wholly formed. The reading of the epistles, and especially the Apocalypse, would, doubtless, admit further development of some of these points already indicated in this sketch, but without making any material alteration in it. This, however, cannot be undertaken here; we shall only consider the prologue to the Gospel, in which St. John wished to give, in a few lines, the key to the whole book. For us, this is the last word of the New Testament, the supreme revelation of the divine mystery.

> "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God. Everything has been made by Him, without Him was nothing made that has been made. In Him was life, and the life was the light of men, and the light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not comprehended it."

On the first page of the Old Testament, we read: "In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth." The new revelation

echoes this old revelation, but infinitely surpasses it: it carries us far beyond the beginning of created things to God; on the first day, when creation came out of nothingness, God was; and the Gospel clearly shows us, far away in this eternal existence, the Word—Who Himself was God—by the side of the Father. This name "Word" does not appear here for the first time in Christian literature; it is already found in the Apocalypse (xix. 13). In a celestial vision, we see armies passing by in long white robes, mounted on white horses, and, at their head, a terrible warrior whose eyes were as a flame of fire, his head encircled with diadems, his vesture dipped in blood; "His name is The Word of God." Here the Word appears, no longer in the splendour of His triumph, but in the majesty of His eternity.

To the reader of both books, this name "Word" had been long familiar; when they read the visions of the Apocalypse, they recalled the Book of Wisdom (xviii. 15). "Thine Almighty Word, from the heavens, from the royal throne, leaped forth, a fierce warrior into the midst of a land of death, carrying as a sharp sword, Thy irrevocable decree."

The Epistles of St. Paul, also, more than once, apply to the Son of God, what, in this book, has been said of the Wisdom of God: Christ is "the power and the wisdom of God" (1 Cor. i. 24); He is "the image of

God" (2 Cor. iv. 5); "the image of the invisible God" (Col. i. 15); "the irradiation of His glory and the imprint of His substance" (Heb. i. 3). The term Word, or *Logos,* is very closely connected with all these titles, and expresses very similar conceptions; St. John avails himself of it in the Gospel, as he had done previously in the Apocalypse. The Word that he presents to the faith of Christians is not the immanent law of the world, as it was for the Stoics; nor an intermediary between God and the universe as represented by Philo; but the creative Word of God, the life and the light of the world, who was incarnate in Jesus Christ in order to communicate life to men and to reveal God to them.

From eternity, before all creation, "The Word was with God"; and it is this preexistence that St. John recalls in his first Epistle (i. 2) when he writes: "We have seen, we attest, and we declare to you, the eternal life which was with the Father, and has appeared to us," and frequently in his Gospel, he reports the affirmations and the testimony of Jesus concerning this eternal life with the Father: "Verily, Verily," said Jesus to Nicodemus, "I say it to thee, we speak of that which we know, we attest that which we have seen . . . no one has ascended to heaven, but He who came down from heaven, the Son of Man" (iii. 11—13); "No one has seen the Father, but He Who

comes from God, He has seen the Father" (vi. 46). "You are from beneath, I am from above, I speak that which I have seen with My Father; and you do that which you have learned from your father" (viii. 23, 38). In His supreme prayer, addressing His Father, Jesus says to Him: "Father, glorify Thou Me with Thyself, with the glory which I had with Thee before the world was" (xvii. 5). This glory, which the Word had with His Father before the creation of the world, is that which St. John contemplates in his Prologue, and throughout his Gospel he never turns his eyes from it. Not that this was any new teaching—already the Synoptic Gospels contained affirmations of Jesus on His pre-existence and His mission in this world; St. Paul's Epistles declare it yet more forcibly as a known truth, universally admitted; but St. John more than anyone else, insists on the eternal pre-existence of the Son of God; moreover, he unites it very closely with His temporal mission, showing us in Jesus the witness to heavenly mysteries: "He Who comes from heaven," he himself says, "is above all . . . what He has seen and heard, it is that that He attests (iii. 31—32). In this way he not only gives a sovereign warrant to the testimony of Christ, but at the same time throws the clearest light on this mysterious pre-existence: He, Who was in heaven, Who descended from heaven, Who can speak of it as a direct witness, He

is the Son of Man. This definite Personality which enforces itself upon our notice, was not of earth. It comes from above; it existed, living and conscious, in that heaven into which no one has penetrated, and it is this very same conscious life that continues on earth. All the love, all the contemplation of this eternal life still echoes in the Son of Man Who speaks to us.

"And the Word was God." Closing his Gospel, St. John writes: "This has been written that you might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that, believing it, you might have life in His name" (xx. 31). The term of this demonstration is set forth in the first words of the Gospel, in the dogmatic affirmation laid down at the commencement of the Prologue; this affirmation finds an echo in the last chapter, when St. Thomas exclaims "My Lord and my God" (xx. 28).

"He was in the beginning with God, everything has been made by Him, and without Him was nothing made that has been made." The Evangelist states anew the eternity of the Word and His relations with God, then he expounds His rôle as creator: The Word *was,* all other beings *became* (ἐγένετο). By his choice of expression, St. John emphasises the uncertain and dependent character of everything that is not God; he draws our attention to the consideration of all these beings one after the other: there is not one

of them that has not passed from nothingness to existence, and that by the action of the Word.

"In Him was life, and the life was the light of men; and the light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not comprehended it." The action of the Word in the world is not exhausted by the first creative act; it is constant and universal. The Epistle to the Hebrews represents the Son of God as "upholding the whole world by the word of His power"; but what St. John here considers, is not the omnipotent action that sustains the universe, but rather the influence of the Word upon men; life was in the Word as in its source, by natural and plenary possession; thence it was poured out upon men, but not on all; all those who would come to Him, would be vivified and illuminated by Him and would be able to say: "We have all received of His fulness." But there would be children of darkness who would stand aside and who would flee from His radiance: "Light is come into the world, and men have loved the darkness better than the light, because their works were bad" (iii. 19). It is the opposition indicated in the last words of this verse—an obstinate opposition—that runs through the whole Gospel.*

* The Greek verb κατέλαβεν, like the French "saisir" admits of two meanings: to understand and to overpower. The first of these two meanings, which we give in the

After touching lightly on the mission of John the Baptist, the Evangelist again expounds the rôle of the Light coming into the world and not being comprehended. "The true Light, which lightens every man, came into the world. He was in the world, and the world was made by Him, and the world knew Him not. He came unto His own, and His own received Him not." There are here, as it were, two progressive forthshinings of the Light. It was in the world as in Its own work, and the world knew It not: this is the blindness with which St. Paul so often reproached the heathen: "God has not left Himself without witness, He manifested Himself to men, and they have refused to recognise Him" (Rom. i. 18—22; Acts xiv. 15—17). The Word being thus manifested in creation and being thus misunderstood by His creatures, comes to His own, that is, among His own people, into His heritage, and His own receive Him not.

Many times, in the Old Testament, He appeared to Patriarchs and Prophets,* and after these transient visions, He had at last come to dwell among His own, and had not been received by them.

Yet, among so many unbelievers, He found

text, is adopted by most of the Fathers and many commentators, e.g., St. Cyril of Alexandria (PG. lxxiii. 104) and St. Augustine (PL. xxxv. 1388). The second meaning is preferred by Origen and by a good many modern writers, e.g., Westcott.

* Cf. John xii. 41; viii. 56.

at least some followers to recognise Him: "All those who have received Him, to them has He given to become children of God." In this adoptive filiation are summed up all the benefactions of the new union, just as His natural filiation is, for Christ, the source of all His glory: "And the Word was made flesh and He has dwelt among us, and we have seen His glory, glory such as an only Son receives of His Father, full of grace and truth." The infinite abasement of the Incarnation, which St. Paul suggests as a pattern to the Philippians, St. John sets forth in a striking epitome: "The Word was made flesh."

He had just described the majesty of the Word, His eternity, His divinity, His creative omnipotence; now he shows what He became for us—flesh, which, in biblical language always expresses weakness, that is what the Word became; nevertheless, He remained what He was, even while blending Himself with us, while pitching His tent among us. In his visions in the Apocalypse (xxi. 3), St. John saw the New Jerusalem coming down from heaven, and at the same time he heard "a great voice coming out of the throne and saying, Behold, the tabernacle of God is among men, and He shall dwell with them."

This was the fulfilment of the images and the promises of the Old Testament; in the wilderness Yahve had accompanied His people in the tabernacle; many a time He

had promised through the Prophets to return and dwell in Israel, and He had said to His Wisdom: "Dwell in Jacob, take Thy heritage in Israel, cast Thy roots among My elect."* All of this will be made perfect in the New Jerusalem, yet all of this is already realised on the earth. The Word has dwelt among us, and we have seen His glory. This manifestation has not been made in a flash, but has been gradual and progressive; the Evangelist notes every stage of it, from the Marriage in Cana, when, for the first time, Jesus "manifested forth His glory, and His disciples believed on Him," to the glorious appearances in the upper room when Thomas cries "My Lord and my God." The glory, thus gradually manifested, is characterised by St. John in one word—it is the glory of the Only Son.

After having, once more, recalled the mission of St. John the Baptist and his testimony, the Evangelist sets forth all the benefits that come to us from Christ—from His "fulness"; then he adds "No one has ever seen God, but God the Only Son, Who is in the bosom of the Father, He has made Him known." This is the conclusion of the whole Prologue, the résumé of the whole Gospel.

On the last day of His life, when Philip

* 2 Sam. vii. 6; Ex. xxv. 8; Lev. xxvi. 11; Ezek. xxxvii. 27; Zach. ii. 10; *ib.* viii. 3, 8; Joel iii. 21; Eccl. xxiv. 13.

asked Him to show him the Father, Jesus replied: "For so long a time have I been with you, and yet hast thou not known Me, Philip? Whosoever has seen Me has seen My Father" (xiv. 9). Hence, merely by showing Himself, Jesus Christ manifests His Father; but He also makes Him known by His teaching, and in His last prayer He can say to Him: "I have manifested Thy name to the men whom Thou hast given Me" (xvii. 6). Under this double aspect the whole of New Testament revelation is included, and this revelation is definitive: it is the Only Son who comes to speak to us of His Father, and who shows Him to us by unveiling Himself.

The teaching of the Son of God, the manifestation of the Son of God: the only object of this book is to remind Christians of this supreme revelation, the source of our faith.

## CHAPTER IV.

### CONCLUSION.

We have traced the progressive development of the revelation of the Trinity by going through the Gospels and the other books of the New Testament. Let us now leave all detail of facts and texts, and try to grasp this revelation of the Son of God as a whole.

What God reveals to Christians are His most intimate secrets, and it is the Son of God who reveals them. To raise men to these inaccessible heights, He Himself came down among them, and, gradually, through the lowliness of His flesh, He allowed His glory to appear. This revelation which surpasses all others, because of its object and its Author, is wrapped in so much humility that, at first, it passed unnoticed. In previous revelations, it was in the full glory of His majesty that God appeared, to the Patriarchs, to Moses, and to the Prophets: men fell on their knees, overwhelmed by what they saw. Now that God is nearer than He has ever been, what He reveals is incomparably more secret and more personal; the whole of humanity is transformed by it, and yet all has been accomplished without violent revolution, without shock, without any breaking with the past.

Men thought that the Kingdom of God

would suddenly burst forth in lightnings and thunder; but its beginnings were so hidden, its development so silent, that it was at first quite unperceived. The expected Messiah-King, even He who revealed Himself as the Son of God, was just a working man, who had been seen earning His bread like other artisans, and whose humble family was known to everybody.

From the beginnings of His ministry, Jesus consorted with the Apostles; He made them the companions of His whole life; it was to them that He revealed Himself as the Son of God; yet never did He cease to live with them, as a man among other men, in the complete familiarity of an existence merged entirely with theirs; not only did He teach and perform miracles before their eyes, but He ate and drank with them, toiled and rested: it was in the course of this familiar life that the faith of the Apostles was born; yet the respectful ease of their relations was not affected, nor did He Himself lose dignity by this contact. We recall the story of Tobias: the young man had lived with the angel, but free from any suspicion of his superhuman dignity; Raphael only revealed himself on the last day before disappearing, after a word of warning and farewell, leaving his hosts prostrate before him, their faces to the earth. Here, however, it is not a question of one of the Seven Angels, but of the Son of God. Little by little, the

Apostles recognised Him, and sometimes cried out, like St. Peter, "Depart from me, Lord, because I am a sinner"; but soon the too lively emotion subsides, and the every-day life is taken up again with so natural a simplicity, that even to-day, the reader of the Gospel hardly notices it. God talking with men, living their life with them—what human imagination, above all, what Jewish imagination, could have conceived such a dream or have described it under traits so simple and so harmonious.

What made this life in common possible, was that Jesus was really man. Raphael said to the two Tobiases, when leaving them, "I seemed to eat and drink with you; but my own meat is invisible as is my drink, and man cannot know it."

Jesus, likewise, had a "meat" that, as yet, the Apostles knew not of; it was to do the will of His Father.

But He needed as well, the meat and drink that nourishes other men. On the mountain of the forty days fast, He was hungry; on the cross He was tortured by thirst; going through Samaria He was overwhelmed with fatigue, and obliged to sit down on the edge of Jacob's well. And, just as with the infirmities of His flesh, the joys and sufferings of His soul are altogether human: it is certainly a man who thrills with admiration of His Father's plans, revealing to little ones what is hidden from

the proud; who weeps over obstinately rebellious Jerusalem; who addresses His last tender and heartrending appeals to the Apostles who abandoned Him, and to Judas who betrayed Him. It is in the transparent sincerity of His human affections that we must look for the secret of these relations—otherwise inexplicable—which attached to Jesus, as friends and brothers, these Apostles who, at the same time, were beginning to adore Him as their Lord. They felt in these touching accents of His, not merely words of condescension, but the direct expression of a nature absolutely pure and virginal, yet none the less very truly human.

And just as Jesus is human, not out of condescension, but because of His nature; so is He divine, not by effort, but because of His nature. And this is why the revelation of the secrets of God that He has made to us is presented so simply. In face of the mysteries that God reveals to them, the greatest saints are overwhelmed, and when afterwards, they try to speak of them, they suffer from realising how incomplete is their vision, and how powerless their words.

Jesus knows neither these weaknesses nor these struggles; for Him the highest mysteries are like family secrets; He sees into them, He is interested in them, He tells them to whom He likes and as He likes. The Israelites dared not look at Moses, and could not listen to him without terror, for his speech

still vibrated with the thunders of Sinai; but the disciples are able to live with the Son of God, to study Him, to listen to Him, because what they recognise in Him is the infinite good pleasure which the Father has in Him, and from Him brims over upon all His brethren.

Moreover, even as He is fully master of these mysteries which He wishes to communicate to men, so He reveals them to them with infinite patience, just as a mother watches for the awakening of reason in her children, that she may give them their first idea of God, and initiate them into the traditions of the family.

The Apostles, whom He chose, brought to Him an honest and loyal will; but they were slow of wit, dull of vision, encumbered with much prejudice. God willed they should be thus to confound the wisdom of the world, and Jesus was satisfied with this providential design. There may be recognised in it also a compassionate intent; for all of us, disciples of the Apostles, seeing in the Gospel the slow stages of their progress in the Christian way, are encouraged to follow through those stages after them.

The incredulity of Thomas has done more to convince us of the Resurrection than the ready faith of Mary Magdalene; in the same way, the slow development of the Apostles is more instructive for us than the sudden illumination of Simeon or of Elizabeth.

When they came to Jesus, on the shores of the Jordan, already prepared by John the Baptist and amenable to his invitation, they were thrilling with eagerness. Is not this the Christ, the King of Israel promised by the Prophets? They see Him, they are conquered, they recognise Him as the Messiah. What further, then, remains? Nothing—they clearly think. Jesus alone gauged the infinite distance which still separated them from the truth: "Ye shall see greater things than these." He does, in fact, unveil these things to them, never by summary declarations which they could not bear, nor even understand, but by those thousand daily touches of which we find so many traces in the Gospel.

For many of the sick the miracles of Christ were only works of compassion; like the nine lepers on the road, they felt they were healed and went away, thinking of nothing but the joy of recovered health, not perceiving the far more precious benefit of faith that the miracle had offered them. The Apostles, daily witnesses of these works and better fitted to understand them, recognised in them the glory of Christ; they fell at His knees crying, "Depart from me Lord, because I am a sinner"; or, whispering among themselves, "Who is this, that the winds and the sea obey Him?"

To all the people, the teaching of Jesus was an object of wonder and admiration.

" He teaches with authority, and not as the Scribes and Doctors." " No man has spoken like this man." But the Apostles, carried away by the example of their Master, were not satisfied with listening and admiring, they wanted to be the wise man who built his house upon a rock, and they strove to put into practice His sublime instructions. It was not the curiosity of a moralist that prompted Peter to ask Jesus, " How often ought I to pardon my brother? Till seven times?" Courageously practised, the divine teaching bore fruit—fruits of life—and, on the very day of temptation and rebuff, when Jesus said to the Twelve: " Do you wish to go away, you also?" Peter replied: " Lord, to whom should we go? Thou hast the words of eternal life; and we have believed and have recognised that Thou art the Holy One of God."

Still more directly than the moral precepts did the parabolic teaching of Our Lord reveal to the Apostles the Kingdom of God and its King; those who were outside beheld, without seeing, and listened without hearing; but the Apostles were initiated into the mystery, they gazed upon what Prophets and Kings had desired to see and had not seen. And all these lessons accumulated in their memories, whence, later, they would be spread over the world—countless treasures both old and new.

And while others saw Jesus pass by, fol-

lowed Him for a few hours, or, at most, for a few days, and then returned to their obscure life, the Apostles lived continuously in His light. The weariness of the long journeys, dangers from the lake tempests, hunger and thirst, they suffered all together. He thought aloud before them: His pity for the people without pastors, His commiseration of the crowd famished in the desert, His joy on seeing the ripening harvest—He told them all, wakening in them gradually the apostolic heart.

They also heard Him say to them that His meat was to do the will of His Father; they saw Him pray; some of them even saw Him transfigured on the mountain. These unobtrusive, reserved, but indubitable manifestations could, of course, be spurned like every other grace of God; Judas, after having been affected by them for some time, became insensible to them, blinded by avarice; but the others, the faithful, gradually transformed by close intimacy with the Master, opened their eyes to the light.

Besides, they were still further enlightened by an influence yet more pervasive: "Blessed art thou, Simon, son of John, for flesh and blood hath not revealed this unto thee, but My Father which is in heaven." Jesus Himself wished to lay stress upon the supreme source of revelation, the source from which everything emanates.

No one can come to the Son unless the

Father draw him; no one can know the Son unless the Father reveal Him. It is the Father who gave to the Son all His disciples, it is the Father who enlightened them.

During Our Lord's mortal life, the exclusively divine action of the inner Teacher is so intimately interwoven with the external action of Jesus, that it is hardly distinguishable from it; besides, it also is slow and patient, it is only preparation: now and then the divine light flashes across the soul, but clouds of ambition spread over it afresh, again come dreams of glory, quarrels for precedence. At last there bursts the terrible storm of the Passion, which shuts out the sky; in spite of the final efforts of the Master, in spite of the Last Supper, in spite of the farewell discourses, in spite of the prayer to the Father, in spite of the Agony, the Apostles are scattered and their faith seems extinct.

The Resurrection re-animates them, but it is Pentecost that transforms them. Even on the day of the Ascension, human dreams are mixed with Christian hopes; the mighty wind of the upper room alone dissipates all these clouds: the grace of the Holy Ghost alone makes Christians of these Jews.

It was thus that the faith of the Apostles was born and grew. One of the most divine features of this progressive development is its continuity with the Jewish faith.

From the early days when the disciples of John the Baptist said among themselves

" We have found the Messiah," to the appearance in the upper room when St. Thomas cried " My Lord and my God," the religious conceptions of the Apostles had become entirely transformed by their intimacy with Jesus, and that without any crisis, without any rupture with the past. These Israelites, so deeply attached to the Jewish faith, attained to the new faith without the old beliefs becoming less dear to them, without the new beliefs disconcerting or frightening them, indeed, they hardly distinguished one from the other; they all seemed fused in the unity of one religion, both resplendent with the wonderful light of Christ, so that, at the Transfiguration, Moses and Elias appeared to the three Apostles within the radiance of Jesus.

The Ascension of Our Lord, the descent of the Holy Ghost, by no means set a term to Christian revelation: they gave it fresh impulse. " It is expedient for you that I go away," said Jesus to His disciples; in fact, from that time, they began to grasp this teaching of Christ, eagerly listened to, but so little comprehended and so soon forgotten by them. After the death of a loved master, it sometimes happens that a disciple idealises his teaching and his person; we know, for example, what Plato has done for Socrates, how he has transformed the moralist of sound sense, made known to us by Xenophon, into a metaphysician and a genius.

Here, however, the historian can neither establish, nor even imagine such a thing: the little community at Jerusalem could not reckon a Plato among its members, and not one of them sought to impose either his aspirations or his dreams upon the rest. They were not, they did not wish to be, anything but witnesses who had followed Jesus from the baptism by John to the Ascension; witnesses who recalled His teaching and His miracles, who related them, but who were in every way surpassed by the grandeur of these mysteries. Yet every day the remembrance they preserved of them becomes more distinct in their minds; their apprehension of them becomes more luminous; the Spirit recalls the past to them and bears witness to the Son of God.

More—Our Lord Himself lived in them—"I will not leave you orphans," He said on His last day, "I go away but I return to you." And He did indeed return, not only in those brief apparitions which enlightened Ananias at Damascus, St. Peter at Joppa, St. Paul at Jerusalem, but especially in His continuous and vivifying presence. "This is the Prince of life," cries St. Peter on the first day, "and no other saving name has been given to men." "For me," says St. Paul, "to live is Christ," and, soon after, St. Ignatius of Antioch repeats this, "He is our inseparable life." The fact is, that all of light and strength that there is in each

Christian comes from this one source; if the Christian knows the Father, longs after Him, forms "holy desires," does good deeds, it is because Christ dwells in him, and that he is animated by His Spirit.

The same applies to the whole Church. She is the body of which Christ is the head, of which all Christians are the members: each one of them has his special function—apostle, prophet, evangelist, pastor; if he fulfil this function, if he live the truth in love, it is thanks to the manifold vital contact which unites the Head to the members, and which ensures diffusion of life through the whole body. Baptism is at once the sign and principle of this union; immersed in the baptismal water, neophytes bury all their past; all stains are washed away, all prerogatives abolished; from this tomb where they are hidden with Christ to die with Him, Christians arise living with His life, "All baptised in one body whether we be Jews or Greeks, bond or free." The Eucharist consummates this union: in it all Christians communicate in the Body of Christ, and also all become one sole bread, one sole body.

Thus faith in the living and quickening Christ is not, for His followers, a dogma superimposed on other dogmas, it is the very heart of their religion, their whole creed is summed up in the phrase "Jesus is Lord." And this lordship is universal: it is not only each follower, not even the whole Church

that is animated and sustained by the Son of God, it is the world itself.

"Everything has been created by and for Him; and He exists before all, and everything subsists in Him." "He was in the beginning with God; everything has been made by Him, and without Him was nothing made that has been made." These are not entirely new revelations. When the Apostles saw Jesus calm the tempest by a word, and said, "Who is this, that even the winds and the sea obey Him?"—when, above all, they heard Him foretell the last catastrophe and judgment and claim the sovereign rôle of the King Who sends His angels, Who judges all men, Who decides the fate of the whole world, they assuredly caught a glimpse of universal majesty and power. Now, they have certain knowledge of it.

Yet the contemplation of this divine glory does not turn their looks aside from the visible and tangible humanity of the Son of Man. The very Apostle who most clearly affirms the eternal pre-existence of the Word of God and His creative omnipotence, is also he who most strongly insists on the reality of His flesh, on that which he himself, the beloved disciple had seen, touched and studied.

And thus in the Church, too, will it ever be: teachers who, like St. Augustine, penetrate the most deeply into the divine mysteries, will also be those most passionately attached

to the humanity of Christ: it is in the humility of the Incarnation that God reveals Himself.

Again, it is through this mystery that He reveals Himself *as a whole;* it is true that it was only the Son of God Who was incarnate, and, therefore, at first it was He Who was manifested to His followers; but no one could know Him thoroughly who did not know His Father in Him. "See how long it is that I have been with you and yet you have not known Me?" He said to Philip with gentle reproach; "Whoever sees Me, sees My Father."

And, in fact, in proportion as the revelation of the Son of God becomes fuller, does the manifestation of the Father in Him become fuller also. We see with what infinite love He sent His Son into the world, and delivered Him up to die for the guilty; He is recognisable in the mysteries of Salvation which are accomplished in each Christian: "The kindness and love towards men of God our Saviour has appeared to us; it is not by our works of righteousness, but by His mercy that He has saved us, giving us the baptism of regeneration and the renewing of the Holy Spirit, which He has shed on us abundantly by Jesus Christ our Saviour" (Titus iii. 4—6).

This action of the Holy Ghost in the soul is also a revelation, raising it towards blessings which surpass, not only its natural

compass, but even its desires, creating in it a filial affection and teaching it to name God: "Father!"

Here, again, this divine action extends to each faithful follower only to unite them all in the unity of the Church.

The neophyte only receives this renewal by the Holy Ghost in baptism, in becoming a member of Christ; the ceaseless action of the Spirit which sanctifies him, which animates him, which evokes from his heart these "groanings" and these prayers, is the action of the Head upon the members, communicating to them, by His Spirit, His own life, and uniting them in Him to His Father.

All this, sanctifying action, revelation, is infinitely precious; and worthy the blood of a God. Yet these are only first-fruits; we are saved in hope; we see God, but as in a mirror, darkly; only in heaven shall we see Him face to face, and that will be Life Eternal, to know Him, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom He has sent.

Meanwhile, what can we do except reach forward in contemplation, in prayer, by the effort of all our Christian life? We are conscious of our impotence, but we lean upon the divine strength which sustains us, upon the divine promise which reassures us.

In conclusion, let us say once more, with St. Augustine: "O Lord our God, we believe in Thee, Father, Son and Holy Spirit: For The Truth would not have said 'Go, baptise

all nations in the name of the Father, of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit,' if Thou wert not the Trinity . . . Directing my efforts in conformity with this rule of faith, as far as I have been able, as far as Thou hast given me the power, I have sought Thee; I have desired to apprehend with my intellect that which I believed, and I have laboured hard and studied much. O Lord, my God, my only hope, hear me! Forbid that out of weariness I should cease to follow after Thee, but grant that I may always earnestly seek Thy face. Thou Who hast granted me to find Thee, and Who hast given me the hope of knowing Thee more and more, bestow on me the fortitude to search for Thee. Before Thee lie my strength and my weakness; preserve my strength, heal my weakness. Before Thee lie my knowledge and my ignorance; where Thou hast opened to me, be gracious to my ingress; where Thou hast closed to me, open at my cry. Give me to remember Thee, to know Thee and to love Thee."*

* De Trinitate, xv. 28, 51 (PL. xliv. 1097—1098).

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